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NEW STATESMAN

'The path that we now take is the path that the people have chosen.'

TUC to meet
Tories get a jobs warning over cuts
Welfare State on way back to 30s
axe falls on the arts
Councils expect big job
Cabinet goes on cuts offen
Minister urges coopera cuts n over education cuts
Fears over cuts creep into Cabinet
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TOP PAY
Spending cuts could hit the old and sick
Full £4,000 M cuts package gets go-ahead as plans are unveiled to reduce public stake in shipbuilding and aerospace
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Clash in Cabinet £4,000m cuts
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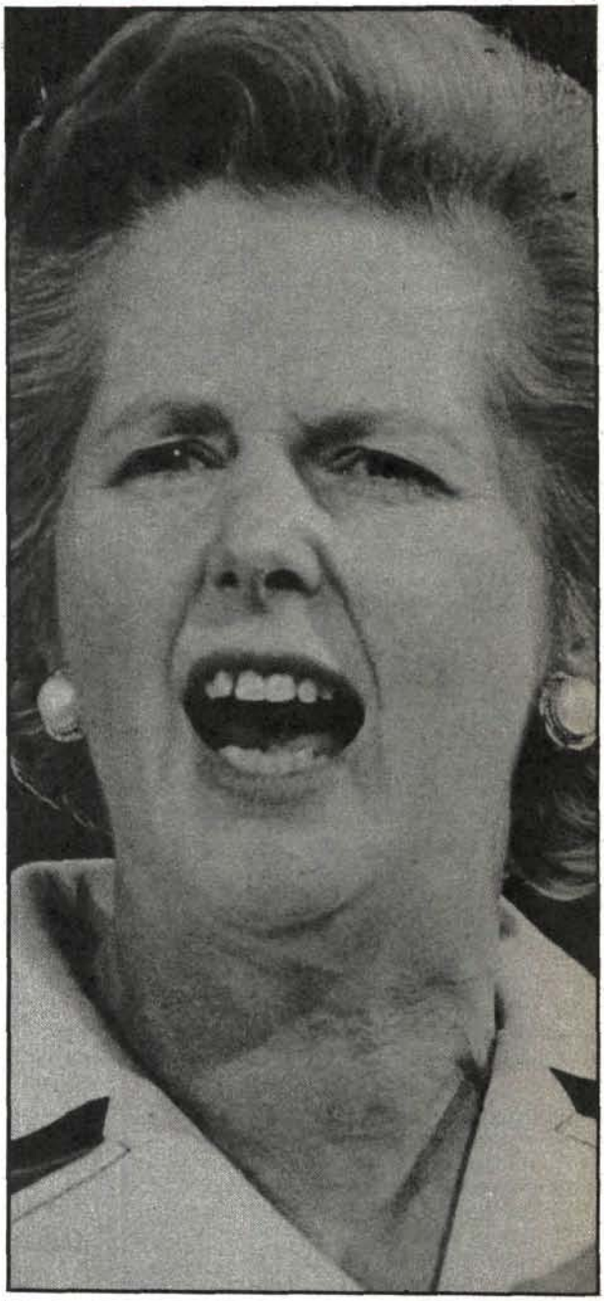

THATCHER
the first hundred days

The threats to Nigeria's consensus/ Inside the secret police files

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol 98 10 August 1979 No 2525

Contents

186 **Notes**
188 **Police 1: Jimmy Kelly:** Rob Rohrer
189 **Police 2: Secret Files:** Duncan Campbell
190 **Education:** Rick Rogers
Nigeria: Richard Carver and Brian Slocock
192 **The Hundred Days' War**
196 **A Vindication of disbelief:** Nicolas Walter
197 **Economic Monitor:** edited by David Blackaby
198 **London Diary:** Paul Foot
199 **Letters**
200 **Arthur Marshall and Roger Woddis**

Books & Arts

201 **Hitlerism:** Neal Ascherson
203 **Maurice Richardson:** Russell Davies
204 **Animals' Rights 1:** Richard Dawkins
205 **Animals' Rights 2:** James Grant
206 **Animals' Rights 3:** Gillian Wilce
206 **Savundra:** Geoffrey Robertson
207 **Kermode's Bible:** David Lodge
208 **Fiction:** Jeremy Tambling
209 **Selected July Books**
210 **Theatre 1:** Michael Kustow
210 **Theatre 2:** Ian McEwan
211 **Art:** John Spurling
212 **Sport:** Russell Davies
212 **Films:** John Coleman
213 **Opera:** Peter Conrad
214 **Television:** Julian Barnes
214 **Weekend Competition**
215 **Chess and Crossword**
Poems by Geoffrey Grigson and Laurence Lerner.
Cover photo: Chris Davies

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Thatcher's change of heart

IT IS NOT often possible to acknowledge the political sagacity of Mr Julian Amery MP, a man whose record of upholding lost colonial causes is second to none. But it must be admitted that he is right to describe Mrs Thatcher's Lusaka accommodation as a retreat from the position adopted by the Conservative party when it took office. Of course, anything worth the name of a policy on Zimbabwe would be bound to offend Amery. It may even be that this week has seen the first victory of realism over Thatcherism. If that proved to be the case, it would be churlish not to recognise the fact, and to hope that the experience would become habit-forming. But any expectation of it would be premature.

The document agreed among the various heads of government does no more than restate the obvious. It says that all parties to the conflict should also be party to the settlement – something which has been clear to everybody except Mrs Thatcher for a long time. It says that the present constitution is defective, and implies that it is defective both in its content and in the method by which it was endorsed. Again, this has been glaringly apparent from the first – to everybody except Mrs Thatcher. It says there should be fresh elections under proper supervision – a discovery made long ago by everybody but Mrs Thatcher. Her enlightenment on these points is progress of a kind, but it has been an expensive education at the rate of one dead Zimbabwean an hour.

It is really disgraceful that so many months have been wasted while Mrs Thatcher dismissed the Patriotic Front as 'terrorists', blithely announced that sanctions would be lifted without conditions and sent a reactionary buffoon like Lord Boyd to discover the flawless character of the elections. The Tory press meanwhile has confined itself to the most abject racism, laced with nonsensical speculation about the safety of the Queen and the shame of Mrs Thatcher having to sit near Joshua Nkomo (how Mr Nkomo may have felt at his own proximity to Mrs Thatcher is a matter for speculation).

For Bishop Muzorewa the experience has also been a bitter one. Despite his sycophantic remarks about Thatcher, and his increasingly cosy relationship with the right wing caucus in the United States, he has had to accept that Africa simply cannot be fobbed off with phoney settlements in the way that it could when Lord Boyd was the responsible minister for the Central African Federation. The independent states, no less than the 'front line' ones, are showing more unity on this issue than on any other. Those who say that few of them are democratic are missing the point. Britain gave an undertaking some years ago that Southern Rhodesia would not start its independence under a white settler system of government, and followed this undertaking with a promise to consult all public opinion on the matter. These promises have not yet been kept. It is as simple as that.

So Lusaka has brought Thatcher to the position from which she should have set out – which is recognising that the guerrilla forces who brought about the limited change represented by Muzorewa did not do so in order to retain the core of white settler power, however concealed. The Rhodesian Front politicians upon whom Muzorewa now increasingly depends will certainly oppose any re-working of the constitution which they foisted (in a whites-only referendum) on the country. It looks increasingly unlikely that the bishop will be armed with full powers to negotiate even if a round table meeting is ever held. Mrs Thatcher too, must confront the racists in her party. Her learning processes would be fascinating to watch if only Zimbabwe (or Britain) could afford them.

NOTES

Clegg perpetuates unequal pay

Anna Coote writes: The unions are trying to put on a brave face after last week's report by the Clegg Commission. The National Union of Public Employees points out that if all the pay awards since the settlement in March are taken together, they amount to an average increase of 20 per cent. Even the lowest grades, says NUPE, have achieved an increase of 14.8 per cent, if the initial award of nine per cent and the £1-a-week 'advance' are taken into account. But the unions are obliged to be cheerful, since they undertook to accept whatever the Clegg Commission came up with, and the deal is not negotiable.

It must be bitter medicine, for the Commission has rejected most of the unions' submissions in favour of those from the employers. NUPE asked for a minimum wage based on two-thirds of the national male average wage. Clegg said no. NUPE pointed out that if the Commission used job-for-job comparison it would end up comparing the low-paid female ghetto of the public sector with the low-paid female ghetto of the private sector and 'once more widen the gap between male and female earnings'. And that is precisely what Clegg has done.

The Commission admits at the beginning of its report that all the lowest-paid grades are predominantly female. In the two bottom grades of local authority manual workers, for example, 90 per cent are part-time workers, almost all of whom are women. The Commission was required by the government to 'assess the appropriate form of comparisons with terms and conditions in other sections of the economy, and identify relevant comparators'. But, as the NEW STATESMAN has pointed out (2 and 22 June), these terms of reference are so vague as to allow it to do almost anything, or nothing at all.

It might, perhaps, have sought to redress the pay imbalance between men and women in the public sector. But it has found ways to avoid doing that. The report rejects NUPE's suggestion that pay comparisons should be made with men's earnings only; explains that this would not be 'fair to cleaning and catering staff elsewhere (i.e. in the private sector) unless, of course, their pay was to be settled on the same basis'; and opts for job-for-job comparison where the lowest-paid jobs are concerned. (Nothing in the Commission's terms of reference binds it to be 'fair' to the private sector – and in any case it is not entirely clear what is so *unfair* about setting standards to which workers in the private sector can aspire.)

The report has received enthusiastic notices in the press. But not much has been said about what its recommended increases will mean to individual workers. A cleaner who is now on a basic rate of £46.90 a week will get an extra £1.76; a school meals assistant on £46.30 will get an extra £2.30; and a laundry worker on £47.42 will get £2.18. These jobs are done almost exclusively by women. A dustman on a basic rate of £50.30, meanwhile, gets £5.90; a Health Service caretaker on £49.22

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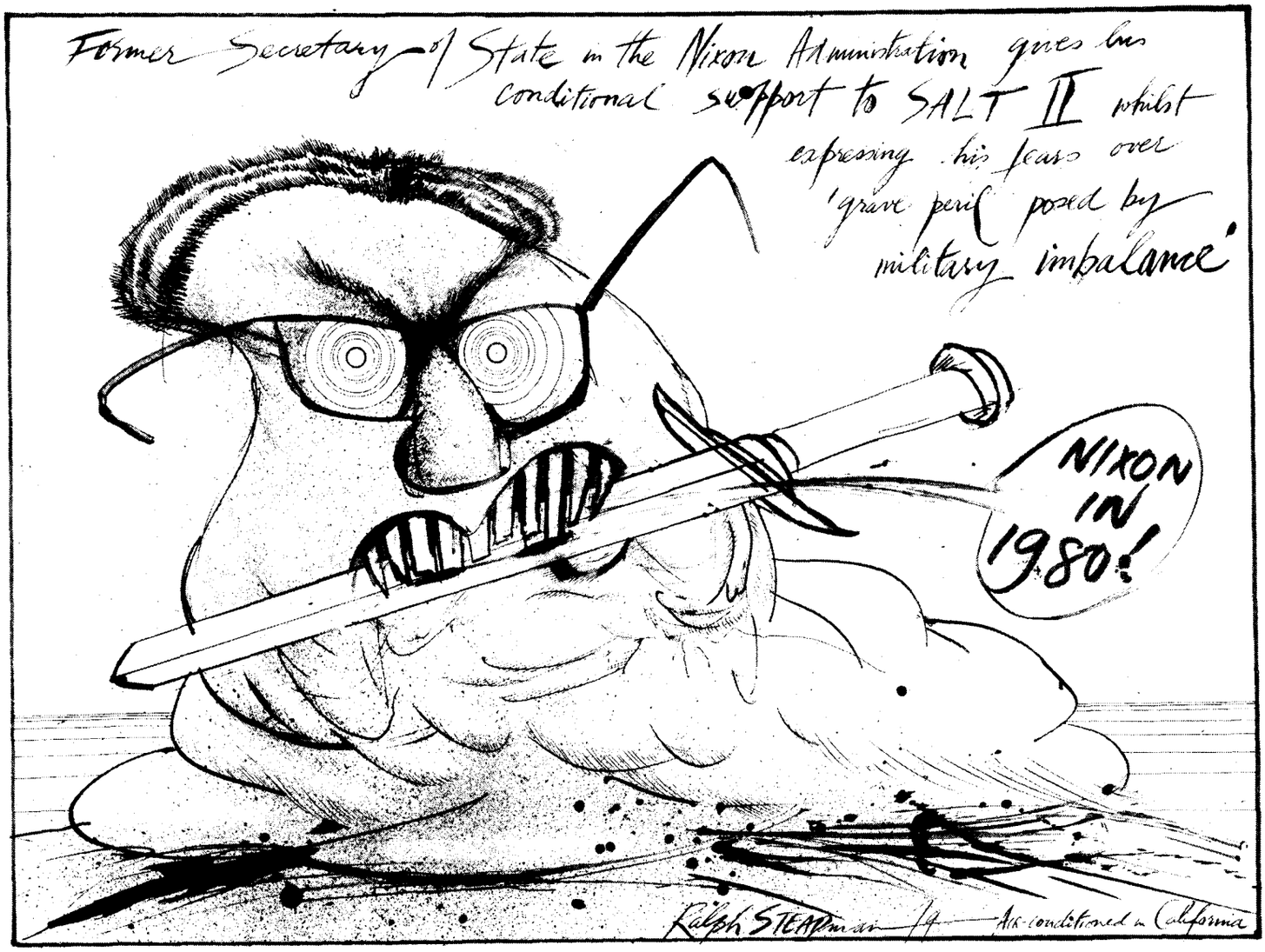
Former Secretary of State in the Nixon Administration gives his conditional support to SALT II whilst expressing his fears over 'grave peril posed by military imbalance'
NIXON IN 1980!
Ralph Steadman — Air-conditioned in California

NOTES

gets £6.24; a craftsman gardener on £52.75 gets £8.83; and an ambulance worker on £56.84 gets £12.40. These jobs are done almost exclusively by men.

Of course the men are entitled to these rises. But last winter's long strike was a fight against low pay and Clegg has given the least to the lowest paid. What is more, the Commission's findings, and the union's obligatory acceptance of them, have put a solid and respectable face on a wages system which perpetuates unequal pay. In the next round of wage negotiations it will be very hard indeed for the unions to depart from the principles of comparability laid down by the Clegg Commission.

The ordeal of Abdul Azad

Joan Smith writes: A 17-year-old Bengali youth, threatened with deportation as an illegal immigrant after his mother's murder, seems to have had better luck than the Patel brothers. After a nine-month campaign by supporters of Abdul Azad, including Oldham West MP Michael Meacher, the Home Office has allowed him to stay in Britain on compassionate grounds. But now the Abdul Azad Defence Committee is to set up its own inquiry into police handling of the case. Mr Meacher, a local trade union leader, and representatives of the Asian community in Oldham are expected to take part.

Abdul Azad came to England from Bangla Desh with his parents at the age of thirteen. His ordeal began last October when police visited him at work to tell him his mother, Mrs Nimraj Bibi, had been found murdered near their home in Oldham. The police say they found evidence in the course of their inquiries to suggest Abdul was an illegal immigrant. Blood tests were said to show Abdul could not be the child of both the people he regarded as his parents, but the Defence Committee says the evidence is inconclusive in view of the death of Nimraj Bibi.

Abdul was held for eight days at Oldham Police Station and subsequently made an official complaint to the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester, Mr James Anderton, regarding his treatment there. An investigation is under way into the complaint and a file is to be passed to the Director of Public Prosecutions. Abdul spent thirteen weeks in Risley Remand Centre, near Warrington, before being released after pressure from Michael Meacher and picketing of the centre by the Defence Committee.

No-one has been charged in connection with the murder of Nimraj Bibi, although police have made exhaustive house to house inquiries among the Bengali and Pakistani communities in Oldham. Mr Meacher has expressed concern in the House of Commons about the way the police have handled their investigation into the murder and the Defence Committee says four Asians will appear before the panel they are setting up to air complaints about police treatment.

How to become a homeless non-person

Andrew Arden writes: When is a person not a person? This self-evidently vexing question has recently been occupying the attention of the Lord Chief Justice and a colleague in the Divisional Court. The context of their deliberations was the Homeless Persons Act, about which we were able to pass on such encouraging news from Poole recently (NS 8 June.)

Ms Browne left her home in Tralee, County Kerry, Eire, together with her seven children, because of her husband's violence. After a stay at a women's aid hostel in Limerick, she had to move on yet again because her husband had succeeded in tracking her down. Her fares were paid to Bristol and, the day after her arrival, she presented herself at the Housing Aid Centre of the local authority, as a homeless person, with a priority need for accommodation. No one could suggest that she had made herself intentionally homeless. And, because of the way the Act is drafted, Bristol was unable to throw responsibility for her onto any other local authority. This is because the local connection provisions of the Act, which allow a person to be sent back to an area they have come from in certain circumstances, can only be used when there is another housing authority to take responsibility. And that means the provisions are confined to use within the United Kingdom, because of the statutory definition of housing authority.

But all was not lost for Bristol City Council. They found another loophole in the Act. Under the provisions of section 6, an authority can discharge its rehousing obligations by securing accommodation from some other person, or by giving such advice and assistance as will ensure that the homeless person obtains accommodation from some other person. On the face of it, the provision would seem to be designed to permit an authority to assist a homeless person by finding them, for example, private sector or housing association accommodation in, or at least near to, their own area. Not so, held the Divisional Court: Bristol City Council had

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been in touch with the Tralee Community Welfare Officer, who promised to provide accommodation for Ms Browne and family on her return and, either through the DHSS or directly, to ensure that she was given the fares home. This was perfectly acceptable to the Court.

The case turned on whether or not the Tralee Community Welfare Officer was a 'person' within section 6. The court said he was. But in the leading judgment of Mr Justice Lloyd, there was a hint of the other arguments which the local authority used to avoid housing Ms Browne. In particular, it appeared to have been submitted that a person (such as she) who has no local connection with the area of any United Kingdom housing authority, but does have a local connection outside the country, is – conversely – *not* a person for the purposes of the Act at all. The Lord Chief Justice was not slow to pick up the point in his concurring judgment: he said he would leave open for another day the 'interesting' argument as to whether the benefits of the Act are to be available at all for someone who has no legal connection with this country and comes, for example, from overseas. This amounts to an invitation to any housing authority which cares to take up the challenge to present the case for consideration. Which way the case will be decided is not hard to guess, giving us this magnificently absurd conclusion: for the purposes of some of the provisions of the Act, someone who has no legal connection with this country *will* be a person, while, for the purposes of other provisions of the Act, such a person will *not* be a person. The distinction will rest in practice on whether or not the person is in this country or not: if he or she is, he or she will *not* be a person; if he or she is outside the country, then the elusive status will be regained and person once again he or she will become.

Are the Tories really worried about crime?

Francis Wheen writes: To the popular press a criminal is, like Caliban, 'a devil, a born devil, on whose nature nurture can never stick' – with the result that ex-offenders only become news when they err again. So perhaps one should not be surprised that there has been no public outcry at the impending demise of the New Directions Employment Project, which will close at the end of this month when its government grant is withdrawn. The Project, based in the North-East of England, was created in 1977 in recognition of the clear relationship between unemployment and crime; and since then it has been quietly but effectively helping the people the tabloids love to hate.

NEW DIRECTIONS EMPLOYMENT PROJECT
WE HELP EX-PRISONERS
CLOSING
THE GOVERNMENT IS RE-OPENING IT AS A RECRUITING CENTRE FOR PRISON OFFICERS

Those involved in the scheme – principally T. Dan Smith, of Poulson fame – reasoned that many ex-offenders return to crime because, with their records, they cannot find any other employment. Supported by a grant from the Manpower Services Commission, the small staff began to persuade Tyneside employers of the need to give former criminals a chance to break out of the cycle of unemployment and delinquency.

The reaction was highly encouraging. Employment was found for 27 'hard-line' criminals with long records, all of whom have since 'gone straight'. As Ian Bell, the current Project leader, says in his final report, published last week:

> These men are now removed from the ranks of 'criminals' and they are making a contribution to society. The financial costs saved, because they are no longer being maintained in penal institutions, cannot be ignored; nor can the saving in suffering of the people who would certainly have been their victims.

Altogether, during a period of just under two years, the Project has helped over three hundred people.

So successful was the scheme that the Project decided to set up a register of local firms who were prepared to take on former offenders; by June this year it had over 230 employers on the list. The next stage was to make a register of potential employees so that a proper placing service could be run. But in June the Project was informed that its MSC grant would not be renewed.

In fairness to the Manpower Services Commission one must point out that, when granting £17,000 last year, they told the Project that their support for the scheme was finite. Nevertheless, says Ian Bell, 'seeing how far we'd got you'd think they might have extended it for six months or so, so that we could get some permanent financing sorted out with employers.'

Small hope of that with a cuts-drunk Tory government in charge; and so, unless private money can be found to fill the gap, the Project will close at the end of August. Willie Whitelaw and his colleagues might, however, care to ponder on the incongruity of spouting about 'law and order' while at the same time refusing to support a venture which is attacking the problem of recidivism far more effectively than prisons ever will.

POLICE 1 Evidence mounts against Merseyside police

Rob Rohrer writes: The third post mortem on Jimmy Kelly, the Merseysider who died violently in police custody seven weeks ago (NS 20 July), will be completed next week by pathologists at Sheffield University. Professor Alan Usher, head of Forensic Pathology, was asked by Merseyside's Chief Constable to carry out a further examination following significant discrepancies between two earlier post mortems.

His report is expected to confirm that Kelly (arrested as he wandered drunkenly home) suffered multiple injuries, and to support another expert view that death was anything but natural. One possible cause of death being seriously considered is that a suspected heart condition in Kelly was fatally aggravated by the assault. A leading forensic dentist at the London Hospital, Whitechapel, has found that Kelly's jaw was fractured in two places by an impact on the chin which tore the jaw away in one direction, fracturing the other side as the jawbone twisted. The injury would have locked the muscles around the jaw leaving Kelly's teeth involuntarily clenched together. This finding discounts police suggestions that Kelly may have come by the injury in some earlier fight. Once his jaw had been broken Kelly would have been unable to sing or shout. But witnesses clearly heard him doing both only moments before he was arrested as he made his way home after a night's drinking at the Oak Tree pub, Huyton. Four separate witnesses say that around midnight on 20 June they saw two uniformed police officers punch, kick and, according to some, strike Kelly with a weapon of sorts.

Home Office pathologist Dr John Benstead held the first post mortem and the Kelly family was simply told by a Coroner's officer that death was from heart trouble. The Southport Coroner's Office, which is handling the inquest, understood Dr Benstead to have indicated clearly the cause of death as 'fatty degeneration of the heart'. In a 90 minute post mortem Benstead apparently missed the double fracture of the jaw, the damaged vertebrae and other injuries. After seeing bruises on the body the Kelly family angrily ignored the Coroner's burial order and commissioned their own post mortem. In a five hour examination Dr John Torres of Wigan Hospital, discovered the serious injuries and extensive bruising. Both wrists also bore vivid handcuff weals.

A report by Merseyside police will automatically go to the Director of Public Prosecutions because the allegations concern a criminal offence. But Merseyside's Deputy Chief Constable declines to explain why such a serious investigation was not immediately handed over to an outside force, or why the police officers involved are still on duty. In recent years far less serious matters of police corruption on Merseyside have been investigated by outside forces and the officers suspended long before a report to the DPP.

The extraordinary conduct of the Southport Coroner's Office might also be questioned usefully elsewhere. The day after Jimmy Kelly died his relatives were granted legal custody of the body. Before long however the Coroner appeared uneasy about the independent post mortem. Dr John Torres was instructed by a Coroner's officer not to perform his examination unless Dr Benstead was present. Since the family still had legal control over the body this 'order' was ignored. Then during the second post mortem the same Coroner's officer, a police constable, interrupted the examination, impounded the body, and confiscated specimens sealed in containers for further tests. He announced plans to place these specimens at a Merseyside police station for safekeeping. The idea was dropped after the family's solicitors objected. The Coroner's officer concerned is PC Arthur Jennion, seconded from Merseyside's Knowsley Division, the same one as the officers who arrested Jimmy Kelly. Jennion still works out of the Divisional Police HQ, not far from Huyton police station.

Any outside inquiry into the Coroner's handling of the post mortems might meet difficulties. The post of Coroner is a judicial one and his power is virtually unchallengeable: he is appointed for life, his decisions are only subject to review by the High Court, and he is not responsible to any government minister. Since the inquest on Lord Lucan's nanny, Coroners have lost some of their powers under the Criminal Law Act 1977. They can no longer name or charge the parties thought guilty of murder or manslaughter. Nor are they bound any more to summon juries in such cases. Their findings must be factual, restricted to the cause of death and not suggesting who is responsible. Identifying those responsible for Jimmy Kelly's death is now solely a matter for the police. In view of that, the overriding suspicion of the Kelly family is natural enough. Can allegations of police brutality be properly dealt with where the force in question is investigating itself, and where the local Home Office pathologist, the police, and the Coroner's officials (including a divisional colleague of the police officers under suspicion) are in regular contact with each other?

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POLICE 2
Duncan Campbell

Police 'local intelligence' files come to light for the first time

Keeping tabs on everyone

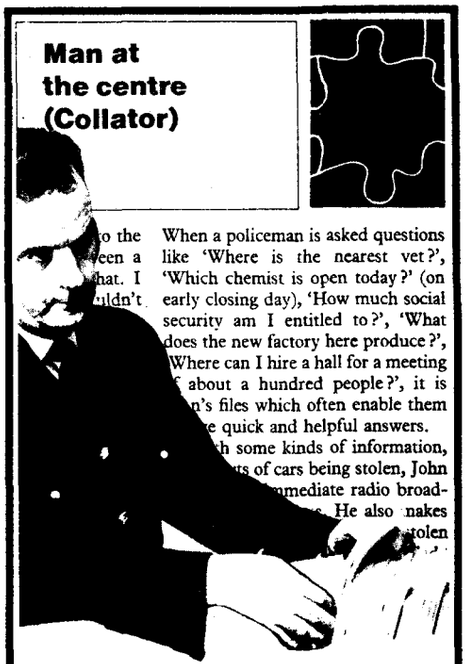
SECRET FILECARDS, which were apparently lost earlier this year by a detective working in Brixton, South London, and which have since been seen by the NEW STATESMAN, provide a unique and chilling view of police methods of gathering information about individual citizens. They show that police regularly record gossip, hearsay and unsubstantiated information; that they permanently file details of any type of police activity against an individual, irrespective of any charge or conviction; and that they open and update files on people who have never been convicted or even suspected of any criminal offence.

Headed *Metropolitan Police – Section Intelligence – Main Index* the files are part of a series compiled and updated daily by a new breed of policeman officially called a 'collator', but privately known by the more sinister name of 'local intelligence officer'. This officer maintains files on people, addresses, vehicles, crimes, non-crime incidents and *ad hoc* specialised subjects. Information is gathered from every possible source, including daily routine reports from constables' notebooks.

One of the misplaced files concerns a middle-aged mother of three, Carol Wilson (she has asked for her real name to be withheld). Mrs Wilson says she is 'shattered' to find that her local police station has kept files on her. She has never been convicted of any offence, nor – according to the records – has she ever been suspected. But a dossier was opened on her in 1975 when her car was 'seen parked outside' another address which was then being watched by Scotland Yard's serious crimes squad. Her file notes the unsavoury fact that the occupier of the house has convictions for grievous bodily harm, rape and burglary. It does not, however, record whether Mrs White herself ever had anything to do with the occupier, nor why her car was parked there. In fact, Mrs Wilson has never heard of the person under surveillance. On the day in question, she had lent her car to a male friend.

Further entries note that Mrs Wilson stood bail for a lodger in her house in 1976, and moved to a new address in 1979. (Another file, on Mrs Wilson's ex-husband, has been 'updated' with this address, although the couple have not lived together for 13 years.) The latest entry in Mrs Wilson's file in January this year, is a message from Scotland Yard that she has purchased a new MGB car: there is no further information to suggest why this should be relevant to detecting or preventing crime.

Files on Mrs Wilson's two sons, Ted and Joe, show that any type of hearsay or gossip can go down on record, and stay there, even after it has proved to be irrelevant. In July 1976 'a private person . . . overheard . . . a conversation' between Ted and a friend about 'a load of nicked stereo gear that they had'. The report was never investigated and remains completely unsubstantiated. Ted's file was started in 1972, when he was still a schoolboy, for no graver reason than that he had been convicted of being a passenger in an uninsured car and fined £1. Four subsequent entries record encounters with the police which did not result in any conviction: they include a caution for carrying an 'offensive weapon' and an occasion when Ted was brought to the police station after a glue-sniffing craze at his school.


HMSO
Man at the centre (Collator)
When a policeman is asked questions like 'Where is the nearest vet?', 'Which chemist is open today?' (on early closing day), 'How much social security am I entitled to?', 'What does the new factory here produce?', 'Where can I hire a hall for a meeting about a hundred people?', it is n's files which often enable them e quick and helpful answers.
h some kinds of information, ts of cars being stolen, John mediate radio broad- He also nakes tolen

Police collator at work with files and photo-display of villains of interest. The photo comes from the HMSO careers booklet on the police, which notes that 'the collator's office is the information centre of the Unit Beat system'.

Another entry shows how an individual can acquire a longer and more damning record simply because of the amount of attention devoted to him by the police (a factor well beyond his control). Ted's file notes that in January 1978 he was stopped with a friend by the Special Patrol Group 'whilst washing car belonging to Dad' outside his home one afternoon. Ted recalls the incident clearly: three SPG men in plain clothes walked up, pushed him against a wall, and questioned and searched him without explanation. There seems little doubt that he had been singled out as a local 'villain' suitable for the attention of the visiting SPG squad.

The file on his brother Joe – who has several convictions for theft and burglary – contains details of five other individuals. Only two are shown as having criminal records and three are marked down for no better reason than that they were stopped and asked their names one afternoon, when they were walking down the street with Joe. Yet all five are listed as 'associates' of a convicted person and even the three without criminal records of their own will now have files opened on them. Joe's record includes details of charges on which he was acquitted and overheard gossip.

A file on Mrs Wilson's daughter, who had one conviction for a minor offence eight years ago, names a recent 'boyfriend' as her 'associate'. Finally, there is a file on the family's lodger, Peter Long. Mr Long has a substantial criminal record but not all the information on his file is accurate. It alleges that he has a child by a woman (not Mrs Wilson) who is named as his 'associate': the claim is untrue, and the police never bothered to verify it, but it remains on his file. (The loss of the files – which were initially passed to the London Magazine *Time Out* – is now being investigated by the police.)

SCOTLAND YARD admitted this week that the Metropolitan Police do gather 'masses' of 'local intelligence information', which may often include details about people who are under no suspicion of crime. The Yard's spokeswoman said it would be impossible to say how many intelligence files were kept locally, since there is no way of counting them. But it is known that these files are kept by every police division, sub-division and section, both inside and outside London. Their sophistication and extent depends considerably on the resources and personal interests of the local collator. Thames Valley Police has had all its local intelligence records on computer since 1975, with capacity to store personal information on one tenth of the local population. The computer entry forms show that the Thames Valley police open files even on *victims* of crime when they report an offence against them to a police station. Likewise, Metropolitan Police have forms to be filled in on victims of arrestees which are almost identical and which include a graded 'identity code' for the person's race – from RC1 (white caucasian) and R2 (dark-skinned Europeans), to RC7 (halfcaste or unknown).

An ex-policeman based in Essex, has told the National Council for Civil Liberties that the collator at Brentwood kept an index file on 'political' matters:

> although this was fairly sparse and mainly referred to known 'Communists' or 'Members of other Subversive Groups' and one in particular who was believed to sympathise with the IRA . . . Not only are records kept of known and suspected criminals, but also of ordinary and innocent people who are about their normal work or social affairs.

His comments seem to confirm the recent discovery that a standard form exists for reporting to Scotland Yard on the various details of organisers and participants at political meetings.

The police have not deliberately set about providing flesh for George Orwell's visions. But internal reforms, begun 11 years ago, have gradually transformed the nature of policing into a system based on the anticipation of crime, expectation of behaviour, and speculation and assumption about individuals. The files which have come to light on the Wilson family revealed the basis of this system. The mindless gathering and cross-referencing of such information in these police files is a sure indication that the same methods are applied to millions of other local intelligence dossiers. The disturbing factor about their files is not the legitimate recording of criminal convictions, but the other material that is added. Above all, laws on privacy are needed to govern such activities and provide redress for individuals like the innocent Carol Wilson, who are aggrieved to find they have acquired a police record which is an offensive compound of inaccuracy and irrelevance.

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EDUCATION
Rick Rogers

The confidential report that forecasts an educational holocaust

How to smash the system – official

THE GOVERNMENT'S SPENDING cuts will seriously damage educational standards, could put 100,000 out of work and would represent an effective dismantling of the state education system. They could lead eventually to a reduction in the school leaving age and the introduction of charges for some educational services which are at the moment free. These are the conclusions of the confidential departmental report on which the cabinet decided to push ahead with the initial 5 per cent cut in the 1980/81 educational budget, to be followed by more cuts in later years.

The report was prepared by the Steering Group of the Consultative Council on Local Government, based at the Department of Environment and consisting of local authority officials and senior civil servants from the Treasury, the Home Office, DHSS, DoE and the Department of Eduction. They had been asked to consider three possible plans to cut spending from the level proposed in the Labour government's public spending White Paper Cmnd 7439, published this January. These were: a 2½ per cent cut in the 1980-81 programme, with a 5 per cent cut in later years; and cuts of 5 and 7½ per cent in 1980-81 with further cuts later. The most severe proposal would save about £550 million in 1980-81, while the 5 per cent cut – the one the government chose – would involve £380 million. However, as the committee pointed out, the effects would be more serious than this suggests as educational recruitment and budgets are planned on the basis of academic years so that the economies could not begin to bite until September 1980 – well into the financial year.

To illustrate the areas in which cuts would need to be made, and their size, the committee looked in detail at the most severe 7½ per cent proposal, which they broke down as follows:

	(November 1978 prices) £m
Under Fives	20
Primary, secondary and special schools	300
School transport	40
School meals and milk	80
Further education	100
Overseas students' fees	25
Youth service	5
Administration and inspection	25
Capital expenditure on education	30
Local libraries, museums and art galleries	15

Thus school milk and meals – once sensitive political issues – just become the small change in a programme which, the committee remarks, 'could be achieved only at the expense of educational standards'. The cuts in manpower involved in such a programme would be so great and would need to be made so quickly that large redundancies would be inevitable. The committee listed the following measures which would involve the loss of 150,000 jobs (more than half in teaching posts):

i. restrictions on the access to school of children under five and the closure of nursery units and classes in some areas;
ii. a reduction in the school teaching force of some 70,000 posts compared to planned levels for September 1980, involving redundancy for approaching 50,000 teachers as well as a virtual freeze on recruitment;
iii. a severe reduction in the quality of teaching and in the range of subjects offered in many secondary schools;
iv. an end to the release of teachers for in-service training, with consequent effects on the quality of the profession;
v. large-scale redundancies of non-teaching staff in schools, increasingly poorly maintained buildings, and further serious reductions in purchasing allowances for books, equipment and materials;
vi. the loss of some 15,000 teaching and other posts in further education, together with 10% cuts in non-teaching costs, the Youth Service, and discretionary awards to students, resulting in diminished opportunities for all young people, especially on vocational courses;
vii. the introduction of full-cost tuition fees for overseas students;
viii. the introduction of a "full-cost" charging policy for school transport (or a flat rate charge of up to £3 per week per pupil), with remission only in cases of hardship or for pupils in special schools;
ix. radical changes in the schools meals service; for example, a 10p increase in real terms in the charge for school meals for primary school pupils in September 1980, a reduction in kitchen and canteen staff in secondary schools by one third, and the withdrawal of all school milk;
x. a severe contraction in the number of administrative staff, inspectors and advisers, at a time when their services will most be needed to minimise the damage to educational standards caused by a rapid decline in provision;
xi. substantial reductions in the building programmes for schools and colleges, leading to a further deterioration in existing stock, and preventing the further education system from responding adequately to the needs of industry and of school-leavers;
xii. significant restrictions on public access to local libraries, museums and art galleries, and reductions in staff and in library book provision.

These are the sort of cuts necessary to keep spending to 7½ per cent below the planned level. A cut of 5 per cent would be 'less damaging' but 'the consequences, including the effect on manpower would still be serious.' Those consequences involve a 'severe reduction' in standards and a widening of the difference in standards between schools.

With wages accounting for 70 per cent of the educational budget, overall cuts of 5 or 7½ per cent can mean much greater reductions in service. Take, for example, the careers service, where demand is expected to grow because of the growing number of people in higher and further education. Here an increase in spending in real terms is needed just to maintain the service. Keeping to next year's spending to the level of 1979–80 would, for example, involve cuts in the service provided for school leavers.

Furthermore, as local authorities are obliged to provide school transport, school meals and milk by law as well as to observe the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Employment Protection Act, such a programme of cuts would involve a massive amount of legislation – a prospect which the committee seems to consider impractical, as the following emphasis suggests:
'All this amending legislation would have to be enacted in the present session of Parliament.'

The committee concentrated on cuts for 1980-81. It thought it would be hard to achieve such a level of cuts which would anyway 'change major features of the post-war service.' But looking ahead it wrote:

> If continuing reductions were to be required in later years, it might be necessary to make further changes in the statutory framework of the educational system, so as to remove the obligation on local authorities to provide a comprehensive service. This could mean both a reduction in the period of statutory schooling and the introduction of charges for certain services at present provided free by law.

NIGERIA
Richard Carver and Brian Slocock

Will the transfer to democracy destabilise Africa's heavyweight?

Regionalism re-emerges

IF MARGARET THATCHER was not aware of it before, she will now appreciate the weight of Nigerian influence in African affairs. Its nationalisation of British Petroleum's assets was directed almost exclusively at the British government and, in the short term at least, it will hurt BP more than it will benefit the Nigerians. The company's 280,000 barrels a day represent only about 10 per cent of Nigeria's total oil production, but they have become all the more precious to BP since the drop in Iranian supplies. Production in Nigeria should suffer no more than a hiccup and only two British families will have to leave the country as a result of the nationalisation – an inexpensively radical gesture on the part of the departing military rulers.

Nevertheless, the gesture was taken to heart at the Commonwealth conference. Nigeria has a quarter of a million men under arms and sophisticated weaponry to match, rivalling those of the rest of the Organisation of African Unity put together. Its gross national product is three quarters the size of South Africa's and its economic power dwarfs that of any other state on the continent. With Venezuela, it is now the sixth largest oil producer in OPEC.

The only flaw in Nigeria's strength is its uncertain political future. In a continent where ethnic complexity is legion, it has an especially troubled history. By the time it gained independence in 1960 its own ethnic pattern – involving more than 200 distinct languages – had largely resolved itself into a structure of rivalry between three regions, each hegemonised by a majority language group: the North (Hausa-Fulani), the West (Yoruba) and the East (Ibo). But within seven

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years a violent sequence of coup and counter-coup plunged the country into a bloody civil war and it was not until 1969 that Biafra's threat of secession was stifled.

For the past decade Nigeria's unity has been preserved by a military government which has kept the political life of the country firmly bottled up. The big question has always been, what will emerge when the cork is finally popped?

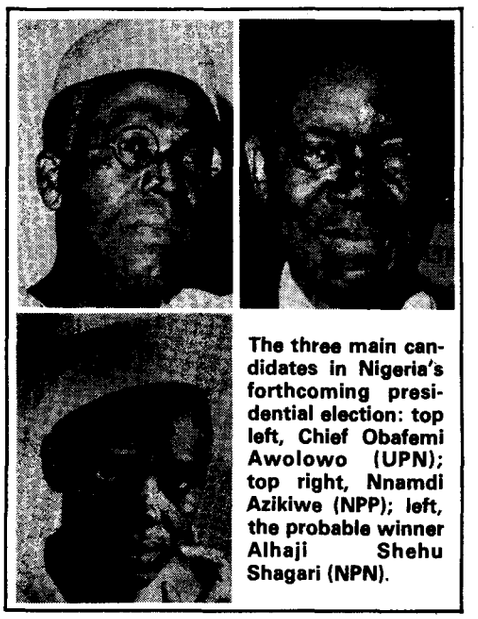
The country is now being steered through a set of five elections (at the hectic pace of one a week) which will replace the military with an unfamiliar civilian structure of Federal Senate and House of Representatives, State Governors and Legislatures, and an Executive Presidency. In many respects, the timing looks propitious. Over the past decade the steady flow of oil revenues has assured Nigeria a high rate of economic growth. An alliance of nationalist-minded soldiers and state bureaucrats has ensured that at least a proportion of the new found wealth has gone to underwrite industrial development and social projects such as universal primary education (to be fully implemented by 1980). The general climate of prosperity has generated an ebullient middle class obsessed with self-enrichment, and allowed the military to forge a broad political consensus centred on the twin goals of economic development and national unity.

HOWEVER, THE ELECTIONS themselves have brought old conflicts out into the open again. Three main parties have emerged, each of which corresponds to one of the old, pre-1966 regionalist forces. The National Party of Nigeria (NPN) is essentially a re-creation of the old Northern People's Congress; the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) is the old Western-based Action Group reborn; and the Nigerian People's Party (NPP) parallels the former National Council of Nigerian Citizens, based in the East. The Presidential candidates of the UPN, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and the NPP, Nnamdi Azikiwe, were the respective leaders of the latter two pre-1966 groups. The candidate of the NPN, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, was the first Parliamentary secretary of the former Northern leader and Prime Minister, Sir Abubaker Tafawa Balewa, who died at the hands of the coup-makers of January 1966.

The results of the Federal Senate and House of Representatives elections demonstrate that these parallels are far from superficial. Indeed, in some respects the regionalist political pattern appears more firmly entrenched than ever. Both the UPN and the NPP fared *less well* outside their respective regional strongholds than in 1959. Although this gave the NPN a somewhat wider base, that party too remains strongly regionalist, with 29 of its 36 Senate seats coming from the former Northern Region. The two minor parties both failed to break out of their own particular regional enclaves in a serious way.

This reappearance of regionalism flows from the contradictory character of Nigeria's development. The economy is overwhelmingly dependent upon oil – without it Nigeria could not even pay its food import bill, much less afford the imported consumer durables so much in vogue among the middle class or the capital goods necessary for industrial development. But oil-based development, within the framework of the 'mixed economy' that is a central part of the military's political consensus, tends to mask certain fundamental problems, providing a superficial veneer of growth and prosperity, while fuelling inflation which exacerbates social inequalities.

Nigeria's industrial development – apart from a few prestige projects of dubious viability – is centred upon import-substituting consumer industries, with car assembly setting the pace. The policy of 'indigenisation' simply serves to protect Nigerian businessmen from foreign competition in those areas where small and middle-size firms predominate, and allows them to buy into partnership with multinational firms where the latter are established. No shift in the balance of economic power has ensued. Even the nationalisation of BP marks no long-term change. Indeed, the growing dependence upon oil and plans to develop large-scale agricultural projects in association with foreign agribusiness tend to reinforce the power of multinational capital over the Nigerian economy. (Once the politcal point has sunk in, BP may well be allowed back to buy oil at a preferential rate.)



The three main candidates in Nigeria's forthcoming presidential election: top left, Chief Obafemi Awolowo (UPN); top right, Nnamdi Azikiwe (NPP); left, the probable winner Alhaji Shehu Shagari (NPN).

An annual rate of inflation of between 20 and 30 per cent, stagnant smallholder agriculture pushing food prices up even more rapidly, and little increase in wage rates, all go to ensure that the mass of the population sees few of the benefits of oil wealth.

In Lagos, the proliferation of private cars has so outstripped the capacity of the roads that vehicles are only allowed out on alternate days. The annual rental of an upper middle class bungalow in the city now costs about as much as an ordinary labourer can hope to earn in a lifetime. As a result some 30 per cent of the city's population are without permanent housing. An official commission concerned with the siting of the Federal capital reported that Lagos's present infrastructure could not bear the triple burden of servicing the country's main port, the state capital and the Federal capital. The military has authorised £50 million to build a new capital, but the problems of Lagos continue unabated.

The military has tried to contain problems such as these within the framework of the national consensus that they have constructed over the past decade. Any attempt to go further is seen as a threat to 'national unity'. Thus the Constitutional Drafting Commission which prepared the political framework under which the present elections are taking place saw an important, if rather abstract, debate on whether Nigeria should have a 'socialist' or 'mixed' economy. But that debate has found no reflection in the current election campaign, because the organisation to which its main initiators belonged – the Socialist Workers, Farmers and Youth Party – was denied recognition by the Federal Election Commission. The Nigerian Labour Party of veteran trade union leader Michael Imoudu suffered a similar fate. Other politicians seem too busy jockeying for position, and the securing of particular sources of support, to discuss real problems and solutions. The 48 million strong electorate have responded to this in two ways: three-quarters of them did not vote at all in the Senate elections; and those who did, in the absence of clear political alternatives, sought the security of the old regional and ethnic banners.

THE MILITARY'S MAIN instrument to ensure the preservation of national unity has been the Constitution which it carefully guided through the broadly-based, but well-managed. Constituent Assembly. The document firmly establishes the domination of the Federal institutions over those of the states and the unitary authority of the Federal Executive over the pluralist Legislature. But with the national consensus having been defended at the expense of reinforcing regionalist loyalties, this political system has explosive implications.

To win in the popular ballot, a presidential candidate requires both the highest number of votes and a minimum of 25 per cent of the vote in 13 of the 19 states. If no candidate can meet these criteria the deadlock is broken by a poll of all federal and state senators and representatives and the candidate with the highest number of votes walks away with the prize. In other words, 'winner-takes-all'. A President can be elected with only minority support in the country and the Legislature. But his extensive executive authority and powers of patronage afford considerable opportunity to 'manage' the Legislature into abject dependence.

This could be far more provocative than anything that emerged in the 1959–66 period of parliamentary government. It would mean the unchecked dominance of a single regional party, with no real compensation for those left out in the cold in the form of significant regional or state-level power. Nor is this mere speculation. On the basis of present trends the most likely eventuality will be the election of Alhaji Shehu Shagari of the NPN. Shagari is an old power-broker type of politician who held ministerial office throughout the civilian era. When an interviewer asked him about the dubious record of some of his associates he replied: 'I am not a judge of morals. Our main preoccupation is to get votes.' And when asked about the regionalist structure of the NPN he added: 'That is good for the country because it ensures that no part of the country is left out in the share of political offices. If we are realistic, this country has not yet matured to a stage where the leaders can emerge purely on merit and not on account of their ethnic support.'

With the cards stacked in this fashion the consensus of the past decade looks in grave jeopardy, ironically because of the very measures the military have taken to defend them. It will take a great deal more than BP's oil money to sort out the tangle which seems bound to result.

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The Hundred Days' War

BEFORE THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WE said that a Tory victory could turn the British economy into an adventure-playground for the fantasies of Sir Keith Joseph and Sir Geoffrey Howe. The first 100 days of Thatcherism have shown plenty of signs of that happening; the monetarist fantasy is being allowed full sway and is ensuring that Britain will face a major recession. In this cause, and in the cause of reviving the British economy by making a few rich people richer, large sections of the welfare state are being dismantled: those who consider this a piece of left-wing rhetoric should read the Department of Education's brief, which we report on page 190. But at the same time there are already signs of U-turns – on industrial policy, in foreign policy – and there are signs of dissension in the cabinet and in the Tory party. The speed of such falling out, however feeble, is indeed some sort of record. Falling out with the electorate is another: if there were an election tomorrow the Tories would almost certainly lose.

We should not forget that the unpopular measures which the Tories have taken were not forced upon them by some unexpected event such as a balance of payments crisis or a visit from the IMF. These policies have, more or less, been willingly embraced as what the Tories intended to do all along. Not, it should be noted, what they promised to do. During the election campaign any deceit was permissible so long as the ad-man's product won the race on the day, regardless of the consequences thereafter. The electorate were given to understand that income taxes could be cut without a commensurate increase in other taxes; that public spending could be cut by figures like Sir Derek Rayner roaming Whitehall in search of waste without damaging the services; and that the Tories would usher in an age in which the government looked after its finances as a prudent family managed its budget. In fact the Tories have embarked on a programme which, as we show below, would in many respects – such as the sale of council houses, and other government assets and the method of cutting local authority spending – be a disgrace to any household budget.

But loyalty to two ideas remains strong. First, monetarism, where unemployment has been promoted to a prime position as the weapon against inflation. Despite quite a lot of evidence to the contrary and despite the enormous cost in terms of unused resources, the Tories believe that a tight monetary policy will create the discipline of bankruptcies and unemployment to make people see sense. Secondly, there is a serious and determined attempt to discredit the idea of the public sector, combined with a complete lack of concern for those people who benefit from public spending. There is, perhaps, nothing more calculated to destroy people's faith in the state's ability to keep its word, than a government which welshes on its pension commitments: the Tories have, so far, done this twice. Both the method and scope of their cuts in public spending will certainly damage the service provided significantly so that, in a few years' time, the evidence that the state is inherently incapable of providing a good service will be even stronger.

When pushed, the Tories say that the cutback in public spending is necessary to revive the economy to health, so there is more wealth to provide better public services. With spending cuts planned well into the Eighties, there is no evidence that they know when this will be, believe it to be true, or even believe that their policies will work.

Labour in opposition has some difficulty in tackling the Tories because their own policies were conspicuously similar: spending cuts, tax concessions for managers, tight monetary policy, selling off state assets, fulsome attacks on strikers and the abandonment of various proposals to get to grips with the unaccountable power of the business establishment.

The experience of the last two years of that government and the years 1967-70 provides powerful evidence that cutting public spending is not the way to stimulate economic growth. Furthermore, it is still an act of faith to believe that increasing the pay of the well-paid will stimulate investment, innovation and growth. Indeed, observers of Britain's industrial decline can see that the problems of British industry stem from days when profits were higher, taxes lower and the public sector smaller than it is today. While other countries were thinking what they might produce in ten years' time, British companies were happy to rely on what they had produced for the ten years previously.

In short, the relationship between the public and private sector and the problems of the British economy are much more complex and, in truth, difficult than the Tories would have us believe. There is some sign that the message is getting through to Sir Keith Joseph that government intervention is the result, not of socialist dogma, but of coping with the problems which beset British capitalism. It is only a matter of time, and a few sacrificial lambs, before the Tories extend their U-turns to other areas of policy. However, the damage they could do in the meantime is considerable.

The Thatcher Cabinet

WEEK ONE: 4-10 MAY. Mrs Thatcher's first task was to dispose of Ted Heath. Despite Heath's hard work during the campaign and letter of welcome which she found waiting at Number 10, this was done as tactlessly as possible: an underling rang Heath's friend Sir Timothy Kitson and asked him to tell Heath there would be no job. Farmer Kitson replied in suitably strong agricultural language and a messenger had to be dispatched to Heath's London home. The ill-feeling which this treatment aroused among Heath's supporters in the party was only slightly assuaged by the inclusion of virtually all the other important Heathmen in the Cabinet.

Thatcher shaped the Cabinet with even more skill than was realised at the time. Because of her autocratic style a few 'thin men' (uncompromising hardliners) in key places – John Nott at Trade, Geoffrey Howe and John Biffen at the Treasury – had proved more than a match for the Heathite 'fatties' in the spending departments. This has enabled her to run the Cabinet with a rod of iron: first meeting was presented with a list of decisions already taken and meetings are kept short.

The crucial test was to come on 23 July when the spending cuts of £4,000 million were discussed. When it came to a fight, the 'rebels' Carlisle, St John Stevas and Jenkin meekly presented their special pleas and then graciously allowed the hardliners to run rings round them.

Thatcher has placed most trust in her Treasury team where the bumptious Nigel Lawson – the most committed monetarist in the administration – keeps Howe and Biffen on their toes. He has replaced Sir Keith Joseph as one of the key powers behind the throne. Joseph himself is becoming increasingly isolated as he is taken over by the officials at the Department of Industry.

Only Lord Carrington has stood up to Thatcher. Ideologically a Heathman (he has certainly never tried to control his own money supply) he beat Thatcher back from her xenophobic line on the boat people and now appears to have persuaded her to see some sort of reason on Rhodesia.

The attack on schools

WEEK TWO: 11-17 MAY. Having given the police and armed forces their pay increases, Thatcher continues to make her priorities clear by taking the heat off the 29 rebel local authorities, who had been resisting the Labour government's plans for comprehensive education, by repealing the appropriate sections of the 1976 Education Act. This is essentially a symbolic act as many councils, including some Conservative ones, are unwilling to unscramble their comprehensive plans. But in the longer term the Tories are anxious to re-establish a strongly divisive education system, based on support for selective schools; integral to this is a major attack on the state education system (see page 190).

The government intends to provide between £50 and £60 million under its assisted places scheme, under which any selective secondary school can offer means tested places, which would be funded directly by central government. This will tend to draw brighter pupils away from the state comprehensives (which will be suffering from the cuts in the education programme). The 1979 Act has been passed off as returning educational decisions to the local community but it is nothing of the sort: selective schools will be able to take pupils from neighbouring local

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authorities, where the council and the electorate may well disapprove of the idea.

The spending cuts in the state schools this year – but an aperitif of what is to come – will hit those areas of education which provide some colour and hope and which are of real value to those who do not have the wealth and leisure which Mrs Thatcher often seems to assume is within the grasp of us all. There will be cuts in nursery places and in provision for the under-fives, in adult education, in remedial teaching and in fringe areas such as music and swimming. The cuts in spending on books are already so severe that some local authorities are asking pupils to pay for them.

The assault on local councils

WEEK THREE: 18-24 MAY. This week environment minister Michael Heseltine announces a three-month freeze on all local authority recruitment in anticipation of financial hardships to come. The first dose of this came in the budget with a £300 million cut in the rate support grant – more than cancelling the small increase granted by the Labour government and £400 million of capital cuts, mainly in housing. This, however, is only the start.

The government's approach to cutting local authority spending has shown that it is not interested in getting value for money or in any sensible budgeting by the councils. First, the local authorities have been asked to cut by 3 per cent spending plans which were agreed in January and which were already underway. But in addition the government has discovered that in total local authority budgets show that spending will be about £400 million over the January level anyway and this must be cut as well. However, local councils always underspend their budget by a few percentage points and it is very unlikely that this money would ever have been spent: this cut will only lead to worse underspending. The operation of the cash limits system – which puts a limit on the amount the government compensates local councils for the effects of inflation on their agreed spending programme – will screw down spending further, both by the cuts made in the cash limits in the budget and by the system's encouragement to underspend.

The system is also making it well nigh impossible for local authorities to plan properly. Not until November will councils know whether they are to be compensated for pay increases already agreed – including the Clegg awards – or for future pay increases; but they have hinted at further cash limit reductions.

Failure to understand the complexities of local government finance has made the Tory government remarkably unpopular with local authorities, even the Tory-controlled councils. So enraged are they by the government's attempts to try and pretend that cuts in local services are nothing to do with them, that the local authority associations are now asking the government for specific advice about what should be cut.

Sale of the century

WEEK FOUR: 25-31 MAY. The housing bandwagon, launched by Thatcher at a Tory rally in Scotland within days of her accession, is well under way. No time is wasted by Heseltine as he warms to the task of dismantling Britain's public housing stock, carefully accumulated over more than fifty years and still the major source of wealth that finances the building of relatively cheap housing for rent.

Central to Thatcher's intention to reshape the mentality and culture of Britain through the mechanism of privatisation (her own ugly word) is giving council tenants the statutory right to buy their own houses, very cheaply. The idea has grown popular because successive Labour governments did nothing to explain the finances of council house building to their supporters, little to meet to real complaints council tenants had about the way they were treated at a time when owner-occupiers made paper fortunes by borrowing cheap money (courtesy of the tax payer) to make tax free investments in real estate.

The Tories are not interested in the financial effects of council house sales and the DoE have yet to undertake any investigation of its financial effects – a glaring omission in a government committed to cutting public spending. Tory councils, however, know better and are already complaining to Heseltine about the statutory right to buy irrespective of the balance of the local housing stock.

They could hardly believe their ears when, in late July, John Stanley, the housing minister and Thatcher's energetic former PPS, dredged up the idea of Shared Purchase. Under this every council tenant will be able to buy part of a council house, no matter how small. A 100 per cent mortgage and a 50 per cent discount on market value would be available.

People foolish enough not to take advantage of such offers – which will involve most of them in paying more for their housing – will be punished. Council rents are set to rise by about £2 a week, as the government housing subsidy is cut back, thus carefully casting the responsibility for increased rents on to the local councils.

The oil crisis

WEEK FIVE: 1-7 JUNE. A spate of oil price rises marks some sort of victory for Tory ideology over reason and the oil companies. Within days of their election victory the oil companies were at the Tories' door telling them the bad news. The companies had spent a lot of time immediately before the election trying to persuade civil servants that there was an oil crisis as a result of the Iranian revolution and the cutback in production by Saudi Arabia as the price of oil rose. Various clever excuses for inaction were devised of which the following was typical: any attempt by the government to warn people that there was a petrol shortage would only provoke panic. The election provided a good excuse for doing nothing: any advertising would be 'political.'

The oil companies told their story to the Tories and suggested a variety of measures which might help reduce the demand; a freeze on new oil-fired central heating installations, no lighting of public buildings after dark, and so on. Energy minister David Howell said he would need to review the situation. This resulted in him saying it all should be left to market forces. It was left to the oil companies to point out that this was not an industry in which market forces operated and demand did not respond that much to price. Howell remained unmoved, until it was clear the oil companies were right. He summoned them for tea one day and asked them to do what they could.

In other areas of oil policy he has, as we pointed out last week, handed the oil companies a bonanza in the North Sea.

Budget week

WEEK SIX: 8-14 JUNE. Howe's budget rats on the Tories' favourite voters – skilled workers and junior managers. Top bosses were helped by cuts in the higher tax rates and investment concessions; low income tax payers benefited from the rise in personal allowances. But the £10,000-a-year family man's prospects took a nosedive. First, the increased personal allowances meant proportionately less to him than to the man on (say) £60-a-week. Second the 3p cut in the tax rate was offset by the VAT rise which added 4p in the £ to prices. Third, the rise in interest rates prompted by the budget measures moved the building societies to plan for a record mortgage rate (see week 9).

In his speech Howe fudged the figures to suggest that everyone would be better off, chiefly by including the tax cuts that Denis Healey had already announced in his 'holding' budget before the general election. In fact the new Tory measures, taken together, meant that only pensioners and the very rich would be noticeably better off. And even for pensioners the long-term prospects were damaged by Howe's announcement that future pension increases would be linked only to prices rather than to whichever was faster-growing, prices or earnings.

One thing the budget did not do was increase the level of child benefits, despite repeated promises the Conservatives made in opposition. Thus, 'The next Conservative Government, which is pledged to major reductions in direct taxation, would regard improvements in child benefits . . . as part of this process' (a Commons early day motion signed by Howe and others in June 1977). Only the day before, the Treasury had admitted that in real terms family support (family allowances and child tax allowances) was considerably lower than in the mid-1950s. Various election commitments go by the board in the budget: prescription charges *are* raised; BP shares *are* to be sold off and VAT is almost doubled.

Fleet Street congratulated Howe on his boldness but the public was less impressed. A Gallup Poll found it to be the least popular budget since they started asking, 27 years ago.

The boys revolt

WEEK SEVEN: 15-21 JUNE. A major gaffe. Thatcher has been assiduous in her cultivation of Tory backbenchers – as often as twice or

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three times a week she can be found dining in the House with backbenchers selected by her whips. Even more extraordinary then, that she did not see the rebellion coming on MPs' pay and, when it did, it shook her confidence badly. She wanted MPs' pay increased to £12,000 in three stages. Norman St John Stevas and the whips thought they could get this through but were wrong, and Edward du Cann, chairman of the 1922 Committee, led the Tory rebellion with much sanctimonious drivel about the invidious position of MPs in awarding themselves their own pay rises.

Undeterred by this roasting from the 1922 Committee, Stevas has stumbled on as an often uncertain leader of the House, trying to pack too much in by immensely long sittings, losing the reading of the Competition Bill and being outmanoeuvred by the Labour whips over the membership and chairmanships of the new departmental select committees. In the best interests of open government he has refused to let new committees have the right to call ministers and has been wary of revealing his hand on the Freedom of Information Bill being pushed through the House by Labour backbencher Michael Meacher.

One of the things we were promised a Tory government would bring was an uplift in the standard of behaviour in public life. William Whitelaw said he would be setting a good example. Not all of his colleagues seem to have been listening: the police have been taking an interest in more than one Tory MP lately. Stevas is resisting attempts by Bob Cryer to ensure that a majority of the members of the Select Committee on Members' Interests do not have outside interests. The register of interests, last published in May 1976, has now been withdrawn from the library and over 30 MPs have not bothered to submit details for the new register; many of those who have, have submitted in the most sketchy and uninformative manner.

Off to Europe

WEEK EIGHT: 22-28 JUNE. In Luxembourg Peter Walker agreed to an average 6½ per cent rise in EEC farm prices, which he could have vetoed. His pusillanimity in the face of the French, who were the only delegation pressing hard for price increases, means that Britain will have to pay net at least £30m more into the budget in 1980, and the British will pay higher prices for their food imports. Thatcher's reaction: 'Peter Walker has achieved an extremely good deal – so good that it has never been achieved before at any time.'

Thatcher herself was in Strasbourg, where the summit agreed to examine whether there is indeed a 'British budget problem' and to bring proposals, if necessary, to the Dublin summit in November. The Tory aim is the same as Labour's was: to agree a lasting solution in Dublin, which should finally defuse the Common Market bomb in British politics. But the Tory style is fundamentally different from Labour's obstreperous Gaullism. The Foreign Office, which is as unbalanced by its Europeanism now as it was by its anti-Europeanism in the Fifties, believes that a host of concessions will sow enough good will to reap major returns on the budget.

Other EEC give-aways include Sir Geoffrey Howe lifting Britain's veto on EEC subsidies to Ireland and Italy for joining the European Monetary System, without a promise that Britain would also get the subsidies if it decided to join EMS. Britain has also agreed to swap 20 per cent of its foreign currency reserves for the new European Currency Units. Sir Keith Joseph has accepted with pleasure new EEC limits on steel subsidies. Subsidies to British makers of North Sea oil-rigs will end. British vetoes on programmes ranging from standards for airport noise to EEC-wide driving licences have been lifted.

Will Thatcher be rewarded for all this in Dublin? Last year's net budget payments by Britain were three times those of rich Germany and they are getting worse. Secret Treasury papers reckon that the cost of Britain's membership, including the higher cost of buying EEC food imports, will be 0.74 per cent of national income this year.

For Britain to pay less than either France or Germany – both of whose per capita incomes are nearly twice those of Britain – the budget would have to redirect a massive £½ billion. This may well be too much for continental goodwill. As Thatcher considers guaranteeing our exportable surplus of North Sea crude to our EEC partners to be politically unsaleable at home sometime in the New Year we can expect the Tories to stop making concessions and slip back, albeit sheepishly, into Labour's wolf's clothes.

The monetary nightmare

WEEK NINE: 29 JUNE-5 JULY. The government is hit by the unpleasant consequences of its tight monetary policy: mortgage rates are to go up. On 4 July the Prime Minister and senior cabinet colleagues meet to find a way round it: the increase would destroy the last vestiges of the myth that the Tory budget had done something for the property owning democracy. Thatcher manages to bully the building societies into holding off increasing the rate to a record 13 per cent until 1980, when it is unlikely to be any more popular than it is now.

Other results of the Tory obsession with the money supply cannot be dealt with so easily. They include the deflationary impact on jobs and output of the Tory budget, loss of control of interest rates and the damage to the economy of a ridiculously overvalued pound. All these are the result of the government's central commitment 'progressively to reduce' money growth. The policy is squeezing companies and forcing big cuts in public spending – made greater because of the need to pay for the budget's tax cuts while at the same time reducing government borrowing.

In fact, the money supply targets announced in the budget were not lower than those of the Labour government, but they will feel tighter because of the VAT-induced rise in prices this year. The same amounts of money will have to pay for higher prices. The deflationary budget makes a recession next year a certainty. Mrs Thatcher may be proud of her decision to press on 'squeezing inflation out of the system' despite the coming US recession and the rise in the price of oil, but even some of her monetarist friends out of the government are beginning to wonder whether or not she is being over-zealous.

Interestingly, Thatcher's political instincts are strong enough to make her baulk at the results of some of her policies. She jibbed at first at the two-point rise in the Minimum Lending Rate in the budget, but, when the Governor of the Bank of England convinced her that without it inflation would soar, she gave in with the faith of the convert and further cabinet discussion was discouraged. Then the commitment of the strong pound wavered in the face of sterling's 10 per cent rise between the budget and mid-July. But, irrelevantly, the government plumped for a greater relaxation in exchange controls which will not stop the rise but may exaggerate a fall.

Prior commitment

WEEK TEN: 6-12 JULY. The Tories unfurled their second stab at union reform this decade. On first glance Prior appears to have learnt the lessons of Carr's grandiose Industrial Relations Court, state licensing and mammoth consultative documents. His reforms were presented as limited and negotiable; just a question of a few word changes in the employment legislation. But soon it became apparent that Prior was not a dove amongst hawks. The sloppy and deliberately vague documents seem to have been penned not by the Department of Employment's legal division but by Central Office. As a result the TUC are still uncertain of part of the Tories' intentions, notably on picketing. For instance, they do not know, presumably because Prior does not know, if the two possible picketing reforms mentioned are presented as alternatives or as part of the same package. The first, milder, reform aims to restrict picketing rights. But what do the Tories mean by 'a party to a dispute' (can other union members or full time officers visit a picket line?) and what do they mean by 'a place of work' (in a multi-plant company can workers picket factories at which they themselves are not employed and how near do they have to be to factory gates before they are adjudged to be picketing and inducing a breach of contract?).

The second reform suggested does not suffer from the obscurities of the first. Instead it restricts virtually everything. Not just picketing: unions would be allowed only to induce breaches of contract of employment. But making the unions liable for interference with commercial contract would strip away virtually all their protection. It may be that Prior does not understand the implications of his proposals. It may be that Prior is merely adopting an extreme bargaining position. But it seems more possible that, despite all the talk in the election of dealing with the union poison, and despite the commitment to act quickly, the Tories cannot agree among themselves about quite how far to push their reforms.

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Sir Keith's U-turns

WEEK ELEVEN: 13-19 JULY. Sir Keith tells MPs that regional aid will be cut by £233m – one-third – by 1982. Both front benches, for different reasons, said the new policy meant a radical change; and similar emotions were fired on 19 July when Joseph said the role of the National Enterprise Board would be trimmed back.

In fact Joseph's counter-revolution is a damp squib. Department of Industry officials eat radicals for breakfast; and Joseph's plans for a more dynamic Britain – like Tony Benn's five years ago – have already disappeared deep inside the DoI's digestive system. The new policies have so far been either arbitary or cosmetic. The NEB, far from being consigned to the two rooms in west London promised by John Biffen, is surprised at how much of its work survives; and despite plans to hive off ICL, Ferranti and Fairey (some of which would anyway have happened under Labour) the NEB is crucially still involved in its new technology role and Joseph is approving new schemes. At Neddy the term 'industrial strategy' has been outlawed: but the structure created to service Labour's dreams has been kept largely intact. Only seven out of 40 sector working parties are being axed. Even Joseph's plans to sell off part of British Airways and British Aerospace are notable more for their financial (like selling the family silver for half its value to pay for the groceries) lunacy than for their fidelity to free-market theory.

Just three months after entering the DoI – complete with a reading list containing his economic philosophy – Joseph is mid-way between an irritant and an irrelevance. The CBI's quarterly industrial survey was concerned with more immediate Tory policy disasters; overvalued sterling and high interest rates. 37 out of 44 industries are more pessimistic than when Labour left office; and there has been the sharpest decline in export confidence on record. By the end of the week the Labour lead in the Gallup Poll is up to 5 per cent.

The cabinet splits over cuts

WEEK TWELVE: 20-26 JULY. Blood spills in the Treasury corridors as the cabinet sets about its second great public expenditure cuts package. First hints of discord amongst Ministers came as the axe fell on spending plans for 1980-81. After a talking-to from Mrs Thatcher the opposition crumbled, but it could revive in later years as Ministers oversee deteriorating services. On 24 July the cabinet decided to make cuts of £4,000m. next year in Labour's spending plan – £1,000m. more than expected.

The implications of the Tory spending policies – longer hospital queues, dearer school meals, enormous rate rises and higher council rents to name just a few – are beginning to sink in. Mostly the voters don't like it. This rattles the Government who make a series of speeches defending the cuts. They claim that the phrase 'cuts' is a misnomer. They say they are merely stabilising public spending and just cutting Labour's plans for growth. It's true that their budget cuts of £4,000m. were much less draconian than they sounded. It is also true that the intended result of 'cuts' this year and next is that total spending should stay in real terms at about the 1978-79 levels. But since some programmes are planned to rise (defence and law and order) and others cannot be controlled (social security and unemployment pay) the remainder will suffer real ones not paper cuts. In addition to this the sharp rises in the public sector wages (with teachers and nurses still to come) mean there are to be extra cuts in services. So the traditional public and social services which are the most important to the poor and weak in society, will bear the brunt of the cuts. There is some equanimity and ignorance of the effect of these cuts in the spending Ministries. On 26 July for instance Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for Health and Social Security, told a delegation from the Association of Metropolitan Authorities that during the social workers' strike in Tower Hamlets there had been no reports to his Department of any fatalities.

Ministers like Jenkin hide behind their Treasury colleagues who say that since there will be no growth in the economy next year there is no room for more public spending. This is nonsense – more public spending would increase the prospects for growth. Cuts in spending in fact are needed to keep the money supply growth down and pay for more income tax cuts next year.

Assault on the NHS

WEEK THIRTEEN: 27 JULY-2 AUGUST: 'Our purpose,' wrote Patrick Jenkin during the election campaign, 'will be to allow the NHS to flourish as a local service, with local decisions being taken by those who really know and understand the problems of a particular locality'. On Monday 30 July the Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Health Authority looked at the problems of their particular locality and decided these would not be improved by a cut of £5.5 million. Two days later Patrick Jenkin, now Secretary of State, stripped them of their powers.

The battle of the health service has largely been one of semantics so far. When the rebel health authority speak of cuts they mean partly that they are not to be allowed to overspend as in the past. Patrick Jenkin can say that he is sticking to the Tories' promise that 'we shall not reduce resources devoted to the health service' while it is perfectly clear to anyone with eyes in their head that he *is* cutting the service by his insistence that health authorities' cash limits will not be increased this year, even though they were calculated on the assumption of an 8.5 per cent inflation rate between November and next March and not on the 17 per cent now expected. Moreover, the limits did not take into account the fruits of Howe's budget – huge increases in petrol prices and VAT. Nor does the policy recognise that certain demographic changes – such as the growing number of old people – mean that real spending increases are needed to maintain the same service.

The other embarrassment for Jenkin has been the report of Sir Alec Merrison's Royal Commission on the NHS, advocating 'gradual but complete extinction of charges', supporting a major hospital building programme over the next 15 years and rejecting insurance funding. Only a few weeks earlier Howe had raised prescription charges from 20p to 45p.

The Tories have, in short, miscalculated badly on the NHS. Pictures of patients on dialysis treatment are wonderful propaganda for populist newspapers and television documentaries (*World In Action* this week was the first of many) and the public outcry may become deafening.

Overseas triumphs

WEEK FOURTEEN: 3-9 AUGUST. At last, some real successes. Sections of the Tory press – more ignorant of foreign affairs than those closer to home – discover a statesman (sic) of world stature. Mrs Thatcher, going to the lion's den in Lusaka, strokes the pride under the chin and makes a breakthrough on Rhodesia. Well, not quite (see page 186).

Indeed, Thatcher's performance in the field of foreign affairs shows the same strand of ignorance as does her approach to monetary policy, and the same capacity for changing direction as that displayed by her industry minister. Take the case of the boat people.

At the beginning of July Lord Carrington took the trouble to see the boat people at first hand – and was horrified by what he saw. On 11 June Willie Whitelaw had announced that Britain would accept another 295 refugees picked up by another British ship (an advance on the Tories' previous position) but he had stressed that the government was unlikely to take more: 'If we had to go further it would place a great strain on resources in many different ways.' Since then, Thatcher had echoed the National Front's position on the matter, saying that the presence of a couple of million 'new Commonwealth' people here meant we could not possibly cope with any more foreigners. However, Carrington's trip to Hong Kong, in addition to pressure exercised on her at the Tokyo summit, forced her to change her mind: suddenly, miraculously, Britain *did* have a bit more room for persons of an 'alien culture'.

Tory Britain

☐ Tory councillor Julian Tobin said: 'I am concerned that we don't want to encourage people in the idea that things can go on like they have before just because they are good things.' – *Hampstead and Highgate Express* (Agnes Stein)

☐ Other examples produced by Sir John Methven, CBI director-general, as evidence of what he called 'a new spirit in management' include a knitwear business which is to downgrade its company cars and wake up its employees early. – *Financial Times* (David Halliday)

☐ Mr Robert McCrindle, MP for Brentwood and Ongar, yesterday called on the government to publish an easy guide to explain the law on picketing along the lines of the Highway Code. – *Southern Evening Echo* (W. Pugh)

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A vindication of disbelief

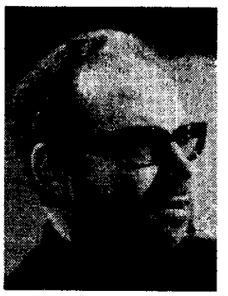
PAUL JOHNSON tries in his 'Vindication of Belief' (NS 1 June) to show 'how Christianity defied the sceptics'. Whether he is arguing that Christianity is true because it has survived, or has survived because it is true, his arguments are wrong – quite apart from their sulphurous odour of theological odium.

JOHNSON is wrong about God. 'In strict terms it is impossible to prove the existence of God; impossible to disprove it either.' If this is true of the monotheistic god of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, it is just as true of all the gods and goddesses of all other religions, and of all supernatural and fabulous beings – even Father Christmas.

The point is not whether one particular god is dead, but whether any particular god is alive. Christians are atheists in the pagan sense, because they deny all gods except one; humanists take the logical step, and deny that one too. 'God' is the name given to man's philosophical idea or psychological projection or personal image of himself, the word used for what we don't understand: God = X. The more we become ourselves and understand the world, the more we take Ockham's Razor to cut out the unnecessary entity and make the presumption of atheism. We don't – and can't – know everything, but we have no good reason to believe that anything else cares about us, or that we came from anywhere or are going anywhere.

JOHNSON is wrong about immortality. There is nothing unnatural or mysterious about wishing that our friends and fearing that our enemies will return after death, and hoping that we ourselves will survive it. Such ideas are encouraged by dreams and visions, and encapsulated in myths and rituals. This means not that the doctrine of immortality is true, only that it is strong.

The Christian version is striking not



In June Paul Johnson argued the case for Christian belief and explained how, down the centuries, Christianity had defied the sceptics. Here, Nicolas Walter (left), editor of *New Humanist* and a well-known sceptic, replies.

because it is so clear and confident, but because it is so wrong and repellent. The eschatology of heaven and hell is, as Darwin said, 'a damnable doctrine'. The 'notion of a benevolent and omnipotent deity', Johnson admits, 'has always presented difficulties', because of the evil in the world. Christian theodicy has never managed 'to justify the ways of God to man', because a creator himself responsible for an eternal punishment in hell for human crime on earth, contrasted with an eternal reward in heaven for human obedience on earth, would be more evil than all his creatures. 'The only excuse for God,' as Stendhal said, 'is that he doesn't exist.'

The eschatology of Bede's Northumbrian earl, who compared man's life to a bird flying through a hall from darkness to darkness, is ethically as well as intellectually superior to that of the Christian missionary. Natural evolution followed by universal extinction is both more preferable and more probable than supernatural creation followed by a predestined choice between damnation and salvation, and Christianity offends morality as much as science. 'If its theory of death is wrong,' says Johnson, 'it is nothing.' It *is* wrong, in both senses.

JOHNSON is wrong about the rise of Christianity. It is unique not because of its eschatology, which it shares with Judaism and Islam, but because of its christology. Christians are people who believe not just in life after death and a last judgment, but in Jesus the Anointed, the Son of God, the Saviour. The basis for this belief is four versions of his life written long after his death, no one knows by whom, or how, or when, or where, and an uncertain number of letters written by a man who first fought and then led his followers. Nearly all who heard the good news rejected it, and Paul opposed Christianity until he had a vision of Christ. As Tertullian said a century later, 'I believe because it is absurd.'

The power of Christianity was not theological but sociological. It took three centuries to become the state religion, after which it suppressed 'infidelity' and 'heresy' by force and fear for 16 centuries. In the seventh century Islam went through the same process, and conquered much of Christendom; in the twentieth century Marxism has done so too, and conquered much of the world. This means not that Christianity – or Islam or Marxism – is true, only that it is strong.

JOHNSON is wrong about the decline of Christianity. He finds 'an acute attack of deicide' in the late nineteenth century, but adds that 'the crisis of religion', as he calls it, 'is more than a century old'. In fact scepticism is much older than this, going back to ancient Greece and Rome (to say nothing of ancient China and India), and coming into sight again when the factions in the Reformation fought each other to a standstill – 'How these Christians love each other!' as Tertullian said. What happened was that people began to reject Christianity as soon as it became safe to do so again. By the seventeenth century various forms of freethought – unitarianism, deism, pantheism, even atheism – appeared on the surface of intellectual life. Long before the Victorians put their consciences on parade, the *Philosophes* of the Enlightenment revived the tradition of undisguised and undisturbed unbelief.

A few British intellectuals later lacked the courage of their lack of convictions and hid their atheism behind the figleaf of agnosticism; but most freethinkers have had no doubts about their doubts. They saw not the ebb-tide of faith – the 'melancholy, long, withdrawing roar' of *Dover Beach* – but the flood-tide of reason. Incidentally, the personal experience was not 'vaguely described', as Johnson claims, but has been vividly documented in dozens of memoirs and novels; it resembles the recovery from mental illness or from membership of the Communist Party.

JOHNSON is wrong about substitute religions. They are no more absurd than the 57,000 varieties of Christianity, and they do at least represent attempts to fit religion to reality rather than the other way round. The point is that all religions fill the same needs, and stand or fall together. We can say with Emile Durkheim that all religions are true, or with Robert Owen that all religions are false, because it comes to the same thing; they are equally true in what they do for their followers, and equally false in what they say about the world.

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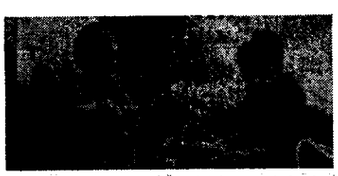

Recently the New Statesman serialised *Sideshow*, a remarkable book in which William Shawcross, using records unearthed by the Freedom of Information Act, anatomises the policy which Kissinger and his master Nixon imposed on Cambodia – 'sideshow' was their own contemptuous label for the nation which they visited with the most destructive bombardment in the history of aerial warfare. Having built their policy upon the fantasy that a mortal blow might be dealt to Vietnam by attacking Cambodia, Nixon and Kissinger usurped to themselves the war-making powers which the US Constitution reserves to Congress – thus covertly extending a war which they claimed in public to be ending. To keep their gigantic bombing campaign secret, they so far subverted the command-structure of the USAF that (in one officer's words) anyone who '. . .punched the right button into the right spot . . . could have had us bombing China'.

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Christianity itself began as a substitute religion, for Jews and Muslims it still is one, and for Hindus and Buddhists it is a crude cult. But for secularists concerned with this world, the concept of future rewards and punishments should be replaced by one of immediate consequences, where ends do not justify means because means are ends. And for humanists concerned with this species, the concept of obedience to a heavenly father should be replaced by one of solidarity with an earthly family, where we treat each other as biological rather than theological brothers (and sisters). From this perspective, all divinity is a substitute for humanity, all religion a substitute for life.

JOHNSON is wrong about the survival of Christianity. It continues to exist not through occasional dogmatism but through general syncretism. Demythologisation and remythologisation are equally effective solutions to the problem of damaged myths, and reductionism and revivalism are equally effective tactics in the strategy of survival. Compare Marxism.

Johnson attacks 'the notion that religion must somehow keep pace with science', but Christianity has done so since Ptolemy and Galen. Every new discovery suffers the dialectical process of anathema, analogy, and absorption. Johnson himself falls into the trap; but to say that the Big Bang theory of cosmogony is 'not so *very* different from the first chapter of Genesis' is like saying that the theory of evolution by natural selection is not so *very* different from the same Mesopotamian myth. Such hypotheses are actually closer to some ideas of ancient Greeks and Indians, if it matters; what does matter is that they are based on reason rather than revelation, on science rather than speculation, on facts rather than faith. Theology is not the queen of sciences, but the whore.

Above all, Christianity has survived because it lives off the capital of humanism. The one thing agreed by nearly all the freethinkers of the past three centuries is that law and morality should be based on utilitarian and humanitarian principles. As Ingersoll put it, 'Happiness is the only good; the place to be happy is here; the time to be happy is now; the way to be happy is to make others so.' Hence the vulgar humanism which pervades national and international politics, and which Christians accept like everyone else; and hence the hilarious spectacle of Catholics proclaiming religious liberty, Protestants proclaiming sexual liberty, and both proclaiming national liberty. Christianity will be no more dangerous in the twenty-first century than it was in the first, and for the same reason – because it is weak. But that is no reason to forget what it was like when it was strong.

JOHNSON is wrong about the freethought movement. He puts it in the past, and says that it 'had the aspects of a quasi-religious sect', that its sections 'operated like independent chapels', that their membership 'peaked in the 1880s', and that 'thereafter their decline was steady and ultimately catastrophic'. In fact the great majority of freethought organisations have been semi-educational, semi-political bodies; and they reached their maximum membership in the 1960s.

There are now about five million people in this country who have no religion at all – as many as those who call themselves Catholics – and, though few of them ever join a humanist organisation, the formal movement which represents them is still alive and kicking. Meanwhile most Christians have abandoned both ritual and doctrine, and few go to church today or expect to go to heaven tomorrow. A vague freethought has virtually become the dominant ideology of established culture and society, though Christianity keeps its old privileges.

JOHNSON is wrong about the arguments of his opponents. He sneers at 'the slogans of the anti-Christians', though they are no sillier than the comparable slogans of contemporary Christians, and also at 'the more positive statements of the Victorian atheists', though they have stood up pretty well to the passage of time. Of course things have changed – optimism has given way to realism, the hope of progress to the fear of regress, physical materialism to neutral monism, the confidence of prophecy to the calculation of probability. But he is absurdly unfair to the freethinkers of the nineteenth century, and apparently unaware of those of the twentieth.

He shows his final ignorance when he contrasts religion which is always the same with science which is never the same. Religion does change in practice, though it pretends not to. But science changes in principle, because this is the point of science. The ultimate truth of science – as of freethought – is that there is no ultimate truth: certainly not Christianity.

ECONOMIC MONITOR

Edited by David Blackaby

Germany's job creation policies

DURING THE last quarter of 1974 unemployment in Germany nearly doubled, from about 557,000 to 946,000, while inflation reached a peak of 7 per cent. The efficiency of monetarism was questioned and, as a result, job creation policies were introduced for five months: in areas of the country with above average unemployment public and selective wage subsidies were paid. Demand for labour was shifted to workers whose unemployment was doing little to restrain the increase of wages overall. Work by Schmid suggests that without the subsidies employment would have declined by 4.89 per cent instead of the actual 3.32 per cent. Ignoring the social costs of unemployment and the economic gains of useful production and preservation of human capital, the scheme cost about £40 million. But Schmid's analysis suggests that if the programme had been implemented better and lasted longer it could have produced a positive contribution to the exchequer.

(The impact of selective employment policy: The case of a wage cost subsidy scheme in Germany 1974-75. G. Schmid, The Journal of Industrial Economics, June 1979.)

Are big farms best?

RECENT WORK by Lund and Hill compares the performance of farms with differing standard-man-days, in different areas. They define farm performance as total farm output per £100 total inputs, using data in the Farm Management Survey and the June Agricultural Census. They present a critique of the inadequacies of the FMS data and, in particular, the estimates of work undertaken by the farmer's family: this is of critical importance in measuring performance and affects any conclusions drawn about economies of size and differential farm efficiency.

Their conclusions are: (1) there is a threshold around the 2-4 man farm size, with smaller farms having significantly lower performance; (2) there is evidence of a continuing increase in performance through to about a six-man farm size but beyond this size, performance does not increase. (P. J. Dawson)

(Farm Size, Efficiency & Economies of Size. P. J. Lund and P. G. Hill, Journal of Agricultural Economics, May 1979.)

Building society bunk

AS THE RESULT of mergers the number of building societies has declined steadily from over 2,000 in 1900 to 800 in 1950 and only 364 in 1976. It is assumed that larger societies are more efficient than small ones, and therefore that mergers will improve efficiency. But work by Gough shows that, measured in terms of the managerial costs of handling funds, larger societies are not more efficient. Furthermore, there is some evidence that they do not generate higher surpluses (broadly equivalent to profit) per £100 assets than smaller societies. The broad conclusion is, therefore, that mergers have not caused an improvement in efficiency. However, Gough shows that the salaries, promotion prospects and authority of managerial staffs are higher in larger societies. It may be, therefore, that management maximises its welfare by pursuing growth, with mergers where necessary.
(R. J. Apps)

(Building Society Mergers and the Size-Efficiency Relationship. T. J. Gough, Applied Economics, June 1979.)

The public sector and Britain's economic ills

BACON AND ELTIS argued that the growth of the non-market sector (output not produced for sale) is responsible for Britain's economic problems. The growth of this sector has been financed by higher taxation, which has caused after-tax profits to fall; falling profits lead to less investment, lower growth and balance of payments difficulties; workers will not accept the increased tax burden so wage inflation accelerates. This theory has now been tested on theoretical and empirical grounds by Hadjimatheou and A. Skouras.

Theoretically, their basic model does not support the analysis; to yield compatible results it has to be distorted with unsubstantiated subsidiary assumptions. Empirically, B and E exaggerate the increased share of the non-market sector; for H and S it increased from only 30.5 per cent in 1955-60 to 33 per cent in 1969-73. No case is found to support the view that the growth of the non-market sector has depressed after-tax profits. Generally, the share of investment and exports in nation income did not fall and in practice workers did accept part of the tax burden. 'In view of the above, B and E's work cannot provide intellectual justification for the view that the growth of the public sector is responsible for British economic ills.'

(Britain's Economic Problem: The Growth of the Non-Market Sector? G. Hadjimatheou and A. Skouras, The Economic Journal, June 1979.)

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London Diary

☐ Can anyone spot the difference between these two quotations?

1. 'When the slag heap was cleared . . . the land site was sold.' (Marcia Williams, interview with Terence Lancaster, *Daily Mirror*, 11 April 1974).

2. 'There was a story that my brother and I had made a lot of money in land speculation. I am afraid the story was untrue. The land has never been sold.' (Lady Falkender, formerly Marcia Williams, interview with Denis Hart, *Sunday Telegraph* magazine last Sunday.)

Before history is completely rewritten, let me recap. In 1973, the Field family, which included Marcia Williams sold 30 acres of waste land at Ince, which they had bought for about £26,000, for £340,000. This mighty profit was attacked by the Tory press, led by the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Telegraph*, to whom Marcia Williams, secretary to Labour leader Harold Wilson, had been for many years a constant target for abuse.

Now the same newspaper groups are presenting Marcia in quite a different light. During the election the *Evening News*, sister to the *Daily Mail*, printed three interviews with her which highlighted her alleged political intelligence.

The *Sunday Express* suggested without contradiction that if she had a vote she would have cast it for the Tories. Now the *Telegraph* weighs in with a regal photograph of Marcia on the front cover of its magazine and *five pages* of flattery and puff. For half the interview, she leads the high life. In three days Denis Hart has her dining at the Dorchester and at Aspinalls; lunching at Luigis and at Claridges and entertaining at home with food cooked by a Filipino servant. For the other half, she is as poor as a church mouse, with only £2,500 in a building society. 'It has,' she says, without anyone suggesting otherwise, 'never been possible for me to have the sort of home I would like'. Well, she has two, one in London, whose lease she bought in 1969; and another in Buckinghamshire. Her children are privately educated.

This is the woman who had more influence on the Labour leadership between 1963 and 1976 than anyone else. Wilson's former press secretary Joe Haines has said that she did more damage to Labour than any other individual in the hierarchy. I always thought he exaggerated, but as I watch the Tory press flipping over on its back to fawn on her, I am not so sure.

☐ If you're one of the very select few who get and read your NS on Thursday, I urge you to watch Thames Television's documentary at 10.30 this evening. It's called *Estate of the Nation*, and the estate is Creggan in Derry, Northern Ireland, which was built for Catholics, and where 40 per cent of the people are out of work.

This is one of the best programmes ever shown in this country about Northern Ireland, not least because there isn't a single shot of kids throwing stones in the street. It is founded on interviews with two women in Creggan who think and react in much the same way as people do who live in council estates anywhere in the world. Gently and persuasively, the women destroy the myths about the troops in Ireland which are now, I imagine, firmly planted in the minds of most British people. No, the army did *not* go to Ireland to 'deal with the IRA'. The women remember the soldiers as their protectors from the Protestant supremacy on the rampage. They even remember Christmas collections in the factories for the soldiers' families.

No, the violence of the troops was not in response to increasing support for the IRA. It was the other way round. When the troops went in, neither woman thought for a moment about the IRA.

But, as the troops turned against the people they went in ostensibly to protect, the women's attitudes changed to disillusionment, then to suspicion, then to outright hatred. The programme perfectly captures these shifting attitudes, and sets them against the background of a city under siege.

This is very rare. Michael Whyte, the director, tells me that in his first few days in Derry he felt ashamed to be associated with British television. 'You think that as a communicator you're quite sophisticated', he says. 'Then you realise that the picture we've been presenting of these people and their city is entirely wrong.'

☐ Michael Whyte is quick to insist that he could not have made his film without Mary Holland, who wrote the script and conducted the interviews. She is the only journalist consistently to have reported in our mass media some of the truth about what has gone on in the North of Ireland in the last ten years. When she first went to Derry in October 1968 she was as she puts it a 'Foreign Office wife' and a career journalist, her course set firmly up the Fleet Street ladder. As she watched the Royal Ulster Constabulary setting about a peaceful civil rights demonstration with all the enthusiasm of a Ku Klux Klan posse, her course changed. Back at the *Observer*, she insisted on telling the truth about 'a Protestant state for a Protestant people'. At first she was given some scope, but as civil rights in Ireland came to be associated with enemies of the state, her reports were increasingly shut out.

She left the rat race, but continued to harass British editors for space to report on Ireland. She was responsible for a marvellous interview in the *Observer* magazine with one of the women in this programme; for the exposé on London Weekend Television last March of the treatment of suspects in Castlereagh barracks and for numerous articles in the NS.

She has been censored far more than she has been published. But her contribution has been worth a hundred times more than all the patriotic trash fed into newspapers and television by government, army and police press officers.

☐ Thursday, 2 August. Lords. Early rain gives me time to dash off a note of congratulation to my old platform comrade Reg Prentice, Minister for the Disabled, for his moving speech to the Royal National Institute for the Blind. Speaking after a huge lunch, Reg argued passionately for cuts in all forms of public spending, excepting, of course, on compassionate grounds, the salaries of Ministers. He went on: 'I would not insult disabled people by pretending that they can contract out of Britain's problems.'

The response, I understand, has been terrific. All day, every day parcels have been arriving at the Ministry of Health full of wooden legs and glass eyes and brave notes 'hoping these will help you with Britain's problems.' Invalid cars have been parked in Whitehall with pledges from their owners that they will stay at home and worry about public spending rather than go to work with a mobility allowance.

Needless to say, there has been the usual sour note from splitters and sectarians who do not care a hoot for the Dunkirk spirit which made this country great. One East End docker has written to inform the Ministry that while as a general rule he would never do anything to increase the number of disabled people in Britain, he is prepared to make an exception in the case of Reg Prentice. If we are to become one nation again, this sort of thing must stop at once.

☐ Friday, 3 Aug. Lords. Rain. I have nothing to read except the TUC's recent pamphlet, *Cause for Concern*, about press coverage of the winter strikes, and Wednesday's *Daily Express*. The pamphlet has been vetted by top TUC officials and is therefore badly written, boring and inconclusive. But it does remind me of some of my favourite headlines from the winter – like the *Daily Mail*'s 'NOW THEY WON'T EVEN LET US BURY OUR DEAD', and all those front-page pictures of rubbish and rats.

Wednesday's *Express* has this, on page 2, about the proposed cuts in council spending. 'Rubbish collections, at present carried out weekly, could become fortnightly or even every three weeks. Burial, allotment and recreation fees might go up.'

The prospect that they (Thatcher and Co) won't even let us bury our dead, and will pile the streets high with rubbish, is greeted by the *Express* (and the *Mail* and the *Sun*) with thunderous enthusiasm.

☐ Saturday, 4 Aug. Lords. Sun. Watching David Gower bat, I am jealously reminded of the outstanding contribution made by the Foot family for Lord Gnome's XI against Stansted Stragglers (Kent) at Fulham South Park the previous Sunday. It can be summarised as follows:

Foot P. lbw Cayford 0.
Foot J. bowled Cayford 0.
Both dismissals were on the first ball received.

The umpire responsible for the first decision works, I understand, for a prominent firm of surveyors. I would advise him, in the event of revolution, to flee the country. If he is looking for a partner in flight, the name of Cayford jumps immediately to mind.

Paul Foot

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ The admission last week by Mr Tim Raison, the Minister of State at the Home Office, that facilities at Harmsworth detention centre for illegal immigrants have been improved by the provision of table tennis and a box of games will not entirely satisfy the Parliamentary Committee which last year recommended drastic improvements to the centre. – *Guardian* (Russell Holmes)

☐ Ralph Hinchcliffe, group managing director, says the more robust attitude of Conservative politicians to the possibility of nuclear war is 'very encouraging'. – *Financial Weekly* (R. Leicester)

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LETTERS to the EDITOR

Shakespeare: guilty

From John Arden

Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien (Letters 27 July) is disingenuous: I am sure that as a fellow dramatist he understands the distinction to be drawn between the opinion 'of the playwright' and the opinion 'of the play' – the latter being a point of view put forward from the stage, either visually or verbally or both, which is accepted by the audience as self-evidently true, for the purposes of the narrative, because nowhere within the play is it challenged by any character or circumstance. In *Richard II* almost everything the King says and does is heavily (and in the end successfully) challenged by someone – Bolingbroke, Gaunt, or whoever. His Irish wars alone escape criticism, except in so far as they are criminally funded and ineptly timed. In fact, they are seen to be one of his few attempts to behave like the proper English King so desired by John of Gaunt to redeem the country from degradation:

'. . . England, that was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.'

Had Shakespeare wished it known that it was *not* England's duty to be supplanting the Irish, he could easily have arranged something like this:

'My dear Burbage,
Act ii, Scene i, after line 159, insert new speech:
York: Nay nay, my lord, rug-headed Irish kerns
Spit no more venom than our English sea-dogs do
Who bravely strive for liberty of this isle
'Gainst Frenchmen or the pirate wolves of Spain.
Therefore disturb them not; they'll prove good friends
Once left in calm enjoyment of their own . . .
Yr. obt. srvt., W.S.'

By neither within the play nor outside it contradicting Richard's sentiment, Shakespeare becomes its accomplice and must therefore bear the consequence.

'For the rest' – whether or not the NS Books in General is the right place for my intemperate polemic is the editor's business, not mine: but I have not noticed Dr O'Brien dividing political views from literary in his own writings. Would an article by himself on, say, *The Influence of Irish Nationalist Poets on the IRA* be a slightly crazy proposition? And, if he wrote it, would he object to seeing it printed on the literary pages? While as for temperance – the O'Brien doctrine of the Two Prongs of Terrorism is surely well in the running for the Mark Antony Award for Polemical Delirium Tremens . . . I noticed he re-affirmed it in his *Observer* the same weekend that you published my essay. I wonder did that have anything to do with his sudden attack of scrupulosity over Shakespeare's exact intentions?

Gort Roe, Corrandulla, Co Galway, Ireland.

Irish football

From Niall Ward

Kingsley Amis is wrong when he stated (Letters 20 July) that 'nowadays the terms "Ulster" and "Northern Ireland" are *everywhere* used interchangeably *without ambiguity* (my italics).' True, they are used this way in *Britain*, but without ambiguity? Hardly. For example: On 22 July, Monaghan won the Ulster senior football final by beating Donegal. Now, given that simple piece of information, and asked to say what State those two counties are in, how would most Britons, or even NS readers, or God help us, English novelists, respond? I have no doubt the majority would place them (wrongly) in Northern Ireland.

This confusion is not accidental. It was deliberately fostered by Irish Unionists and British officials in an attempt to confer a spurious respectability on an artificial and arbitrarily created statelet by identifying it with an historic and natural entity. That the term 'Ulster' is so commonly misused in Britain and elsewhere is a tribute to the counterfeiter's art. But in Ireland the province of Ulster and the political unit of NI are never confused.

As for Conor Cruise O'Brien's condescending put-down of John Arden and your literary editor (Letters 27 July), I find it distressing that he has now added another string to his bow of intolerance. Formerly, when dismissing those with whose views on Ireland he disagreed, he was content to indict them as sympathising (if only unconsciously) with the 'IRA/Sinn Fein armed conspiracy.' Now, like a zealous Soviet apparatchik confronted by a dissident, he imputes their sanity ('slightly crazy'). What next, Cruiser? Rehabilitation centres for wayward literati?

London W11

The psychiatrist as butcher

From George Cowley

As an ex-schizophrenic who has recently spent 16 years in a mental hospital, I read R. D. Laing's review of Thomas Szasz's three books with avidity. His remark that, according to Szasz, the psychiatrist can imprison the patient, drug him, torture him, cut his brains out, or shut them off, entirely at the doctor's discretion, reminds me of the consultant psychiatrist (known to staff as 'the Butcher') who, some 12 or 14 years ago, wanted me to have a pre-frontal leucotomy, and who, when I voiced doubts about this, said to me 'Well, it could hardly make you any worse than you are now, could it?', which I thought was a bloody awful thing to say to anybody. Fortunately my common-sense prevailed, and, (after an interview with the prospective surgeon) I refused to sign the consent form. (Equally fortunately I wasn't 'on a Section' at the time, so couldn't be forced against my will.) Had I *had* the leucotomy. I somehow doubt if I would have won a prize in your Weekend Competition a fortnight ago – though there again, perhaps I'd now be editor of the NS.

Perryfields Hostel, Midland Road, Worcester.

Political strategy for racial equality

From Russell Profitt, Councillor, London Borough of Lewisham

Mike Phillips' and Anna Coote's article – 'The Quango as referee' (NS 13 July) – is I think a rather timely reminder of the truly sad and pathetic predicament of what is now known as 'Britain's Race Relations Industry'. (A title which I think refers to the fact that not only is 'racialism' institutionalised, but now so too is 'anti-racialism'.) Small wonder therefore that the established agencies, such as the Commission for Racial Equality, are now seen, and treated, with great circumspection and little regard by the communities they are supposed to help and/or represent.

The fact is that there is now a widespread and growing belief, held by members of the black and Asian communities, that the CRE is a 'comfortable and cosy' organisation which, time and time again, prefers to work 'the system', rather than challenge it to its very roots. The tragedy is that, with government rebuffs of the recent sort, disillusionment with it from minority communities, and low staff morale, the CRE appears to be not even very good at that. So much so that very few tears, if any, will be shed, if indeed it does become an 'axed quango'.

It is worth noting that at the 'Black People's Manifesto Conference' which was held during the General Election and at which over one hundred Black and Asian 'activists' attended, there was almost unanimous support for the proposal that the CRE and all its associated concerns should be abolished. Interestingly enough this proposal was supported not only from the expected quarters, such as previous employees of the CRE and its predecessors, but by current CRE employees, including Community Relations Officers.

To my mind what is clearly still required, if we are to create racial equality, is strong anti-discrimination legislation, a national institution to engage itself on academic research, the existence of an independent network of lawyers and legal support workers to pick up and deal with individual cases of discrimination, together with an independent, vigorously led, and determinedly managed campaigning organisation, which would engage the energies of the black and Asian communities in the struggle for equal rights. Such a force would need to be based on the growing political strength of the black and Asian communities, and would have to operate firmly within the political sphere, rather than be merely concerned with single issues such as 'sus' or educational opportunity or welfare rights, since it is now patently clear that so many of our needs demand political solutions. This of course is something which cannot and never ever will be done under the beneficent tutelage of a State appointed commission such as the CRE. If we are serious in our intention to bring about Racial Equality, then we in the Black and Asian communities will have to do it for ourselves, or forever suffer the impositions of others.

12 Duncrievie Road, London SE13.

From Louis A. Chase, Chairman, Westminster Community Relations Council

Permit me to respond to the article, 'Quango as Referee' by Mike Phillips and Anna Coote, (NS 13 July) and letters from David Lane, CRE and Kate Francis, NACRC (27 July). It appears all too easy for some readers to deal with points of fact and conveniently avoid the guts of the article which was capsualised in the headline: your investigators find an 'unequal contest' being 'worse for the ethnic minorities'.

I am sure that most of your enlightened readers would accept that racialism is an integral part of this nation's social heritage and thus the CRE and local CRCs, because of their pretence, may be perceived by some sectors of the black community as institutions of power and influence. The moral concept of racial equality may be paid lip-service to as a matter of political expediency and therefore it is incumbent on the black community to make a political response if we are to achieve political power and influence in this land. David Lane is right when he says that, 'racial harmony will be impossible without racial justice'. But this is an unachievable and unrealistic goal for the CRE. Poor whites have not been treated justly by the state. What chance have blacks? But we shall work and *wait* till the 10th-100th generation.

Some bloody dust

From Steve Shulka, faceman, Markham Main Colliery

Ivor Evans in his letter (20 July) states that 'the reduction of the dust hazard in coal mining is one of the technical success stories of the industry'. What rubbish. You have only to ask some of the old colliers about this problem, to find that there is more dust in the pits today than ever before. I'd like to know has Ivor been at the tail end when the machine booms out the lip? Or on the face when the chocks are being pulled in? Believe me there's some bloody dust created by these operations, and a whole lot more is created by similar ones.

Strange place for a guillotine

From Frank Salmon

Christopher Hitchens states in his review of Herbert R. Lottman's *A Biography of Albert Camus* (NS 20 July): 'The guillotining in *La Peste* is indeed rooted in an experience undergone by Camus' father'. There is no guillotining in *La Peste*. However, there is in Camus' earlier novel *L'Etranger*. I sincerely hope that this is an error on the part of Mr Hitchens and not of Mr Lottman himself.

16 Warrington Road, Ipswich.

How it happened I don't know. I missed seeing a proof by going abroad. Lottman would be incapable of such a slip. C.H.

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FIRST PERSON
Arthur Marshall

Bric-a-Brac

As understanding readers will I am sure be aware, I write these weekly pieces when in contemplative mood and it is always, so far from thrustful and 'with it' is my general life-style and approach, quite a number of days before my thoughtful words actually burst upon an expectant public. This time-lag leads me sometimes to appear to be a somewhat sluggish and uninterested reporter. Far from the truth, I do assure you. Nobody follows important events with a keener and sharper eye than I do and it is this awareness of what is happening in the world outside our Devon village of Appleton that emboldens me to tell you that by the time you read this, I shall be either alive or dead – as profound a statement as any I have ever made. But let me explain.

I write, you see, on the very day when Skylab is announced as being about to go critical, as we in the know phrase it, and when rather hot and jagged and heavy portions of it may shortly be joining us here as we go inoffensively about our daily rural lives. The *Sunday Telegraph*, an admirable paper in every way and always wishful to be of help to its readers, has printed a map of the southern half of England from London to the Lizard and has caused to be inserted across it a swath about sixty miles wide and labelled POSSIBLE DEBRIS SPREAD AREA. The swath includes most of Cornwall and half of Devon and bang in the very middle of the lethal Devonian section sits Appleton, fully exposed to the perils from above. It is almost as if the wretched thing were being specially aimed at us.

The news that we are locally in the very front line and at maxi-risk has caused no sort of panic, I am happy to say. Here, in the spacious grounds and rooms of 'Myrtlebank', complete calm has reigned. I just rather hope that my arum lilies, a picture at the moment, will come to no harm. My fifteen-year-old Ford Cortina, in Goodwood green and a real chum, stands in a rather exposed position on my tarmac drive-in, but there is nothing to be done about it and it takes its chance with the rest of us. The only small precaution that I have taken is to remove a rather attractive Coalport *jardinière* from the sitting-room to a more secure position in a cupboard beneath the stairs. Elsewhere there has been a mild sort of activity. My Cousin Madge, as cool as any of her home-grown cucumbers, convinced that the very first piece of debris is going to descend slap through her greenhouse, has hastily gathered all her ripe tomatoes and has left the green ones to face the music on their own. Miss Entwhistle, who goes back, and comfortably, to the first world war, planned at first some sort of wartime dug-out consisting of rugs and a hamper beneath her kitchen table but decided in the end that she was being feeble and arranged instead to go on a picnic to Dawlish, itself well within the swath. If you're going to get killed, she reasoned, why not do the thing in style with a glass of Chablis in one hand and a cheese-and-lettuce double-decker in the other? Canon Mountjoy, officiating at Matins in our vicar's absence on holiday, put in a professional plea for safety, adding rather unfortunately a request that we be spared any 'foreign bodies', words to which a number of July visitors took exception. The Bultitudes are, I need hardly say, at Cannes, an area apparently fully excluded from the 'high population re-entry orbits' as set out in the papers. A cheerful post-card from them adds the words 'Why not fly out and join us?' There are, at a casual first count, forty-three reasons why I can't.

Turning, while awaiting Skylab, whole or in part, to other items of news, one is cheered to find oddities in almost any direction that one cares to look. In this respect, the Church seldom lets one down (does anybody besides myself recall a merry advertisement fifty or so years ago in the *Church Times* which offered the domestic services of 'lively widow, fit as a fiddle and not above dusting'?). I note that a Merseyside vicar has complained, and how justifiably, about balls from a neighbouring cricket club zooming over his fence, invading the sanctity of the vicarage and either landing in the washing-up bowl or damaging the vicar's mini-bus (BALL STRUCK MINI-BUS says a vivid sub-heading). And now we see that the Methodist hymn book, boasting 984 well-tried winners, is to attempt to keep, so to speak, more in tune with the times and is expanding its repertoire, joyous news indeed though a warning note has wisely been sounded by Bishop James Matthews of the American United Methodist Church. There, it seems, they only avoided by a whisker including in their own up-dated hymnal a cheery number entitled 'I want to be a Jesus Cowboy in the Holy Ghost Corral' which, appearing as it does to identify the other piously-chanting Methodists with cattle, strikes a slightly unfortunate note. Nobody wants, even in the mind's eye, to be lassoed and dragged into church by the leg, still less to be mounted by a cowboy yelling 'Yippee' in that unpleasing fashion so popular in films and on the telly.

Incidentally, devoted followers of the news as brought to us by the daily prints may well have been asking themselves why I chose to place the pleasing Coalport *objet d'art* mentioned above in a cupboard rather than in one of the many 'Myrtlebank' lavatories (two down, two up) where it might have 'lain unrecognised' for many years. That short quotation comes from the report of an unusual happening which took place about 1 p.m. in a lavatory belonging to the Earl of Verulam at his house near St Albans. Picture the exciting scene! Friends are expected to lunch and lavatories ('Care to wash your hands?'), not to speak of lunch, have been dusted and made ready. A crunch of gravel, a ting-a-ling at the bell and behold, the guests! There are, apparently, two of them (I am now referring to the lavatories) and close together, for who can tell what violent urge for washing may not on a sudden seize one's guests, and into one of them, though whether before partaking of sherry or after it we are not told, sweeps none other than Sir John Figgess, director of Oriental ceramics at Christie's and as keen as any of us would be to wash his hands after the journey from London. The door closes behind him and a bolt shoots prudently across. And meanwhile we in the know await in a state of hushful suspense, well aware that history is about to be made in this secure little nook.

I do not, alas, know either Sir John or his age and am therefore unable to hazard a guess at what he said when he found what awaited him in the lavatory of his choice (apart, of course, from the customary appliances). Perhaps 'God bless my soul!' would cover it. For there, staring him in the face or somewhere, was a 14th century Ming wine jar 18 inches high with copper-red and white underglaze, one of only five known examples. No top, unfortunately, but an object that was still worth £95,000 and which was instantly snapped up at auction by beaming, gig-lamped, oriental-featured ceramicist Mr Matsuoka, a Tokyo museum owner. Had Sir John, seeking a wash, veered to the right rather than to the left, or vice versa, and penetrated the Ming-less lavatory, the Ming jar might have 'lain unrecognised' for several more decades. Imagine!

After reading this, and spurred on, as few of us would not be, by the thought of all those lovely noughts in the purchase price, I made a hasty tour of the 'Myrtlebank' lavatories to see whether anything of value or interest was lying there unrecognised. But apart from a dead spider or two, not a sausage. My Cousin Madge, though a great hoarder of things 'that may come in one day', fails to hoard them in her lavatories. Our only local hope therefore is the Bultitudes. Their lavatories tend to be large and, I am afraid, to contain jokey material – lavatory paper holders that play tunes when revolved and mild framed indecencies from *La Vie Parisienne*. On their return from Cannes I shall call and beg them to investigate. Even the discovery of a forgotten grand piano ('So *that's* where we put it!') would be better than nothing.

Roger Woddis

Joke over

Pravda **has called on Soviet comedians to make 'a deep analysis of current events' as the basis for witty monologues.**

It was Chortle Day in the Kremlin,
And Brezhnev told his staff:
'Enough of current problems,
It's time we had a laugh.
I've got this stand-up comic –
No, Quiet, Please, don't shout.
You've read your *Pravda*, comrade –
Now make us fall about!

The comic made up stories
From items in the news,
Of clothes that fell to pieces,
And drunks and leaky shoes;
And wheat that was imported –
'It goes against the grain' –
And soon the Politburo
Was laughing like a drain.

'There was this workers' leader,
Whose name began with B;
He had a country *dacha*
And a villa by the sea . . .'
And when the joke was finished,
A heavy silence fell.
He now has two kind doctors,
And drugs to make him well.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

Neal Ascherson

The Dead Planet

The Meaning of Hitler by SEBASTIAN HAFFNER *Weidenfeld* £5.95
The War That Hitler Won: Nazi Propaganda by ROBERT HERZSTEIN *Hamish Hamilton* £8.50
Thresholds of Peace: German Prisoners and the People of Britain by MATTHEW BARRY SULLIVAN *Hamish Hamilton* £10
Nuremberg: A Nation on Trial by WERNER MASER *Allen Lane* £7.95
The Murder of Rudolf Hess by HUGH THOMAS *Hodder & Stoughton* £5.95
The Siege of Berlin by MARK ARNOLD-FORSTER *Collins* £6.50

A few years ago, it was possible to watch archaeologists digging through London's mediaeval ordure. For centuries, cartloads of shit and kitchen rubbish had been tipped over the Thames bank. Now it lay open to the sky again, a yards-deep deposit over which scholars laboured by day and looters scrabbled by night. It was dry, blackened, nicely stratified, packed with fragments of this and that, and had lost its stink.

Third Reich studies remind me of that scene. All over the Nazi cloaca they swarm. Some are reconstructing that Germany by microscopic analysis of pollen. Some are using metal-detectors to find gold for publishers. A few can remember what it was like when it was still flowing and stinking, and stand over the excavators' trenches in meditation.

Sebastian Haffner is one of these meditators. He remains one of Europe's great journalists, in command of his facts but unconstrained by the pudeurs of the academy. His hypotheses are brilliant and sometimes terrifying, and they range from stating an obvious conclusion so far missed by others to pushing a new notion to the limits of tolerance. On finding an old interpretation, his instinct is to stand it on its head and see if the contents fall out.

The Meaning of Hitler has a central theory. Hitler, says Haffner, pursued two incompatible aims from the outset. One was ultimate German domination of the world, as victor in the fate-struggle of the nations. The other was the extermination of the Jews. Early on in the war against Russia, after the first successful Soviet counter-offensive before Moscow in late 1941, he recognised that the first aim could not be reached. 'He abandoned the former as unattainable, and entirely concentrated on the latter.' To win time for the Final Solution, he ignored all opportunities to bring an increasingly hopeless war to an end, and insisted that it be fought to a finish. More than that, and true to his beliefs, he accepted that Germany must be totally defeated. 'In December 1941, Hitler the politician finally abdicated in favour of Hitler the mass murderer.' Lethargy fell over his political manoeuvres. Only in August 1944, in the final phase, did he recover his energy, now directed 'to the total ruin of Germany'. He ensured, or thought that he had ensured through the last bunker orders of March 1945, that Germany would be smashed into extinction as a nation which did not deserve to survive, as a sacrifice to the future which 'belongs exclusively to the stronger nation from the East'. The Germans had failed to rise to their chance; now Hitler himself intended to act as the instrument of history's retribution.

This fearful interpretation allows Haffner to define Hitler as the greatest national traitor who could be imagined, one who deliberately brought about the death of 7 million Germans, the misery of the survivors and the destruction of the German state. He firmly rejects the idea that Hitler in the bunker was so ill as to have lost control. He can also, with this theory, argue that Hitler was in no way the heir of previous German leaders. When the first world war seemed lost, Ludendorff put the conservative opposition in power to end it. At the same stage in World War II, Hitler arrested exactly the same political force – the only internal group which had ever posed a serious danger to him in the early Thirties. He certainly could claim no descent from Bismarck or Luther; indeed, Hitler adopted Germany without really knowing it, 'because his inborn power instinct pointed to the Germans like a compass needle as the greatest power potential in Europe . . .'

Haffner observes that Hitler was not even a statesman. In a most un-German way, he ignored the state (which he only understood as an emergency structure for making war). He thought in terms of race and nation, but even there, his ideas were confused. He saw history as two struggles, not one: there was the *Schicksalskampf* among nations ending with world dominion for the strongest, but there was also the struggle within the white race between Aryans and Jews. The Jews actually intended to exterminate humanity and create a 'dead planet', and the white nations must therefore combine temporarily to wipe out the Jewish diversionists before resuming their own mortal competition. Hitler never managed to disentangle these themes.

As a leader, Hitler was unique in his decision that everything must be achieved in his own lifetime. He would have no successor, he knew. So he 'subordinated his political timetable to the presumable duration of his earthly life', even ending Germany with his own suicide. No other 'great man', as Haffner says, assumed so monstrously that he was irreplaceable.

On a much lower plane, it was an assumption that Nazi propaganda put across with some degree of success. Goebbels naturally did not tell the people that Hitler could have no political heir. But he built cleverly on the slogan that it was a choice between Hitler and destruction. That was in any case something approaching common sense in the later war years. Aware of the coming Russians, aware of the Allied 'unconditional surrender' demand (but unaware that – according to Haffner – their Führer had already accepted Germany's ruin as the price of ridding Europe of the Jews), many Germans who disliked the Nazis could see no escape from that choice. Goebbels never got the leadership to give him his 'total war', although it was a popular slogan with the nation. But there was a reality to the final bitter slogan of *Ausharren* – 'stick it out'.

All the same, it is misleading to call a book about internal Nazi propaganda *The War That Hitler Won.* Herzstein's text certainly does not prove that positive acceptance of National Socialism increased as the war went on (still less that Hitler's own contributions in wartime had much to do with it). Even Goebbels did not expect that to happen. All he wanted was to ensure that 'we shall never lose the war for reasons of morale' – and nor they did. It's a statement which throws no real light on private opinions, demonstrating only the resurgence of the oldest binding force of all – nationalism in adversity. It does not exclude the existence of far wider areas of low-level resistance in the working-class, at a shop-floor level, than the Allies recognised immediately after 1945.

Goebbels, as Herzstein says, thought that the first world war had been lost because the nation's confidence was sapped by enemy and Bolshevik propaganda. Starting from this quite wrong premise, he wasted years telling the Germans boastful lies about war successes. This did not matter too much while there

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were indeed real successes, but as soon as the going became tougher, it proved impossible to maintain this level of optimism.

As the war years passed, Nazi propaganda seems to have discarded much of the ideology. Herzstein shows that Goebbels was most successful with sombre, self-pitying themes: the encouragement of bitterness against Allied air raids, the grand festival of mourning after Stalingrad, the cult of death in the service of the Fatherland. Some extremes of racial propaganda went down badly. The public enjoyed the mocking of the fat imperialist John Bull, his Jewish plutocrats, his miserable slums. But the propaganda ministry tried to steer abuse away from the Russian people as a whole towards safer targets like 'Jews and Bolsheviks'; an SS pamphlet entitled *The Subhuman*, aimed at all Slavs, was eventually withdrawn in the Reich at the ministry's insistence.

Herzstein is obviously fascinated by Nazi wartime film. The films get much space, with plot summaries, and I suspect he would have done better to have written a book about film and nothing else. Some of the feature films – *Jud Süss*, of course, *Kolberg*, the Schiller and Bismarck biographies, the film about Kruger which shows Queen Victoria drunk – have been shown since the war. Others, like Veit Harlan's sugary fable of strength-through-suffering, *Opfergang*, and the lively *Wunschkonzert*, are less well known. Goebbels' personal interest in the use of feature films for propaganda is well understood, but Herzstein suggests that he intended some of the later works, certainly *Opfergang* and *Kolberg*, to last beyond the anticipated fall of the Reich and to influence future German generations. The wartime newsreels, all supervised and re-worked by Goebbels himself, were brilliant but intensely theatrical. Soviet newsreel of the time has an open, universal quality which the Nazi *Wochenschau* carefully excluded.

Among Herzstein's stacks of data about the structure of the propaganda apparatus, there are glints of real enlightenment. Goebbels, with his sure manipulative instinct, preceded the Situationists in his understanding of politics as spectacle. He left the major coverage of the Stalingrad mourning rites to radio and the press, for instance, aware that newsreel was clumsy at sounding minor keys. Again, there was the row over the familiar radio fanfare which heralded a 'special bulletin' of major war news. When a magazine published a picture showing that the fanfare was just a gramophone record, Goebbels tried to have the editor sent to a concentration camp.

Herzstein's work does not solve the many questions surrounding German public opinion in wartime. It's a pity, for example, that in assessing the impact of propaganda he made no use of two famous collections of children's rhymes by Enzensberger and Peter Ruhmkorf, which include many filthy cracks about the Reich's leaders. Admittedly, they deepen the mystery. Did British wartime children sing play-yard songs about Churchill shitting himself in air raids, or the King doing naughty sex things to Roosevelt? No, but neither do Third Reich *Kinderreime* imply that German parents were as irreverent and disaffected as their offspring. Nazi loyalty was slow to erode, and the first impression after reading *Thresholds of Peace* is of the surprising solidarity around National Socialism and the Führer which survived among German prisoners of war in Britain.

At its extreme, a single hutful of zealots at the Watten camp in Caithness continued long after 1945 to believe that Hitler had won the war, and that their continued imprisonment was a mysterious loyalty test devised for them by their Führer. More generally, the British 're-education' programme in the camps was resented even by those who were personally affected by individual educators. As Sullivan shows, loyalty to Nazism actually hardened up in some cases when prisoners felt that the programme was undermining their unity as a group. They snuffed hypocrisy. How could the British reconcile their moral claim to 're-educate' with the fact that they were holding back hundreds of thousands of prisoners to use as cheap labour for several years after the end of the war?

Re-education sometimes did work, usually in the hands of the odd genius like Herbert Sulzbach. This Jewish refugee, half-angel and half-imp, contrived to melt savage SS hearts by applying a German patriotism so antique that it still appealed to individual decency and responsibility. In British hands, there were big problems. The programme's chief, Henry Faulk, concluded in his masterpiece *Group Captives* (Chatto & Windus 1977) that re-education never got past misunderstandings about its purpose – misunderstandings which were also unresolved quarrels about what Nazi commitment really meant to the average German. Sometimes the programme sank to the British establishment droning on about the splendours of the British Establishment; more often, there was a high academic content. But the PoWs wanted to work out their own salvation – in their own country.

Sullivan tries to record the full prisoners' experience, from capture to homecoming. The French spat on them; the British civilians at first looked through them as if they were made of glass. Only those so lowly that war's loyalties were above their heads treated them at once as human beings: the black American soldiers, or the Welsh farmworker who broke the law to slip them food, saying: 'In my country we have a saying: the poor help the poor. . .' Sullivan's book, thoughtful and excellent in many respects, suffers from misprints and howlers – like the statement that Mecklenburg is now in Poland and that Silesia was renamed 'Wroclaw' (the Polish for the city of Breslau).

If the British and Americans, especially, had decided to train a revolutionary force selected from the camps and to ride them into power on the backs of allied tanks, re-education would have had more political point. As it was, the alumni of Wilton Park and Featherstone Park did not inherit their country. There was to be no revolution, because there was to be no German state, and certainly no question of Germans sitting in judgment on the Nazi regime. One result was the Nuremberg Tribunal.

Most of the possible comments on Nuremberg have been made. It broke a basic legal commandment by defining the crime after it had been committed, and it ignored the extent to which several of the victor powers had been guilty of similar offences. The actual charter of the International Military Tribunal referred to 'the trial of the major war-criminals', thus convicting the defendants before the trial had even opened. Sebastian Haffner reminds us that Nuremberg disastrously confused war crimes and military atrocities with the extermination of whole populations, clearly an offence of a quite different nature, a 'civilisational disaster' as Haffner put it. We don't need Werner Maser's new book to conclude that Nuremberg was 'not an international court of justice but a victors' tribunal'.

Maser's *Nuremberg* adds little in any direction. It is a querulous, confusing account of well-known facts and a recital of well-known grievances, interspersed with allegations rather lacking in evidence. Who says that Oswald Pohl was beaten up by Allied interrogators – except Pohl? Where's the proof that Stalin and Truman insisted that Hitler should not be on the list of defendants? Why allege that Streicher was beaten up by Jewish GIs 'applying Old Testament law' when Streicher's account – if true at all – says he was physically mishandled by *black* troops? Did Eisenhower personally order Lumumba's murder? Maser makes a good point or two: the evidence that Germany was not militarily ready for a long war, treated with contempt at Nuremberg, is indeed generally accepted now; and Maser revives the curious Quirin Case, in which the US Supreme Court seems to have held that individuals could be tried under international law. But this is not a book with authority.

Maser insists that Hess was perfectly normal at Nuremberg, shamming his amnesia. Dr Hugh Thomas, as the world knows now, insists that the shaggy-browed loony in the dock was not Hess at all. I think he is wrong, but his book is not just a leap after the pot-boiler at the rainbow's end. Dr Thomas writes well and concisely, and seems to believe what he is saying. He was attached to the British Military Hospital in Berlin and knows Spandau (how well he describes that grotesque routine, each Power offering a prison lunch of its own delicacies after the routine inspection of the prisoner by Allied officers!).

His case is a sort of inverted pyramid of evidence. At the apex is the matter of the prisoner's chest. Dr Thomas has seen it, and has also inspected the X-rays. He states that there is no trace of Hess's wound from the first world war, a bullet through the lung which always leaves an ineradicable scar. Therefore the prisoner can't be Hess, who therefore in turn must have been disposed of – presumably murdered in some SS intrigue during 1941. Thomas then adds more evidence to the pyramid: the plane in which Hess took off could not have reached Scotland, there is only one witness who recalls Hess saying anything about a peace flight to Britain and he is suspect, and so forth.

There isn't much comment to make about Thomas until he has dealt with the devastating retort by the magazine *Spiegel*, apparently annihilating those two latter points and alleging a string of further errors. Even *Spiegel*, however, can't quite fill in the hole that isn't in the prisoner's chest. Couldn't we tempt the jailers to throw a special four-power banquet in Spandau, ending in drunken agreement to release those chest X-rays to the press?

Mark Arnold-Forster's *Siege of Berlin* is a postscript to books like these, a reminiscence

Among this week's contributors:

RICHARD DAWKINS is the author of *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford).

DAVID LODGE's books include *The Modes of Modern Writing* (Arnold).

MICHAEL KUSTOW is an Associate Director of the National Theatre.

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of the airlift 30 years after it came to an end, with a few chapters of subsequent Berlin history tacked on. The author was a correspondent in Berlin in 1948-9 and the best parts of his book deal with the Big Lift itself. It solved nothing in the long term, as he says, evading rather than challenging the Soviet blockade of the ground access routes. But it was a proud affair. With elementary navigation aids, the planes of coal, newsprint and food (meat boned to save weight, potatoes dehydrated) were fed into the narrow air corridors to land at three-minute intervals round the clock. This was the tough old Berlin of power cuts and ruins, saccharine and frozen fingers and the ceaseless grumble of the aircraft over the roofs, a Berlin now remembered with nostalgia in a city which is safer and richer but relegated to a dim corner of world attention. Arnold-Forster doesn't regret that: he welcomes the 1971 Berlin agreement, and pays tribute to the material success which has been achieved by East Germany since the building of the Wall.

It's a pity, though, that he is casual with the political background. It begs vast questions to say that Stalin always wanted 'Communist' regimes in Eastern Europe, to blame the Russians for disrupting Four-Power control without accusing the French, to suggest that Bizonia was formed for economic reasons only, to say that the airlift made West German membership of Nato possible and negotiations over reunification impossible, to blame the *Russians* for increasing work norms in East Germany in 1953 and to omit Malenkov's political scheme for relaxation . . . and an old hand like this ought not to write that British soldiers in Berlin are part of Nato.

Russell Davies

Anteating

Fits & Starts by MAURICE RICHARDSON
Michael Joseph £6.50

I met Maurice Richardson many times, usually in editors' offices just before lunchtime. The cry of 'Oh *hello*, Maurice!' that greeted him always amused me, for it was unmistakably a cry of alarm as well as affection. Maurice could look very alarming. He had a wonderfully handsome and square Brutus head, but the short-nosed face wore a turned-down smile that managed to be rueful and faintly malevolent at the same time; while the heavy body, broad and lurching, should have belonged to a still-combatant veteran night-club bouncer. Maurice wore slept-in suits and, whenever I saw him, the most comprehensively crushed, cracked and abject shoes I have seen supporting a person of reputedly fixed abode. In a manic phase, however, Maurice was not keen to return to his abode. He had generally been up all night spending his winnings, followed by his losings, and had come round in search of possibly reviewable but mainly floggable books. Editors who loved him must also have dreaded him towards the end of his life. But to those of us who took no particular responsibility for his well-being he was the source of completely unpredictable forms of amusement – even when, in depression, he hadn't a good word to say for mankind. (At such times, he did not exclude from his execrations of the human race those members of it who were presently standing him a drink.) When he died last year, I heartily wished I had noted down some of the preposterously elaborate gossip with which he had rolled us round, once book-business was settled and lunchtime proper had got under way.

So one of the great attractions of this well-named memorial collection is that it preserves some of 'the flavour of his talk', as the obituarists say – though Maurice's talk, once he got going, was a riot and confusion of flavours. He gets going frequently in this book, and the best pieces occur when the author is not quite, editorially speaking, on his best behaviour. A supposed profile of Lady Bath and the Tree family turns into an account of an East End pub crawl, with Richardson's loyalties sprawlingly divided between his slumming aristocratic companions and those natural, instinctive allies of his, in every city: barmaids. A piece propounding the theory that 'race meetings are exactly like dreams' gradually abandons generality and concludes with Richardson 'joining in "I've Got A Lovely Bunch of Cokernuts" rendered by six Midland bookmakers' and sparring with a veteran jockey's tiny grandson, who lands a foul blow 'which he has obviously been taught'. A sober but typically teeming and disquisitive review of a scholarly tome about ants reaches the following wonderfully characteristic climax:

> . . . as a boy I often ate ants. *Lasius*, I should think; I never dared try *Formica*. They tasted sharpish but not unpleasant. I was put on to them by an old man I met on Woodbury Common. He was

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spreading them on bread. He told me that in vagrant circles they were known as the tramp's caviare. This is my sole original contribution to myrmicology.

Conscious eccentricity plays a part here; but more to the point is the happy habit of being 'put on to' things. In the bizarre heterogeneity of his non-literary interests, Maurice was much like Edmund Wilson, whom he mentions approvingly at several points.

Richardson was a keen amateur psychoanalyst and an imaginative Freudian interpreter. The Marquis de Sade does not bring the best out of him (no doubt Sade would be pleased to know he has never yet brought the best out of anybody); but Richardson's court reporting from the Moors Murders trial is brilliantly dispassionate, and goes right to the heart of certain matters that have outlasted the immediate horrors of the case. An account of boozy luncheons with Aleister Crowley – Richardson had mildly maligned him in the papers, and the suddenly hospitable Beast was out to stupefy his guest into signing an incriminating post-prandial apology – brings alive this horrible old penile-headed fraud in a way which had eluded commentators approaching the subject with a clear head.

As for Maurice's own psyche, he treated its urges playfully: a delightful essay called 'In Search of Nib-Joy', about the quest for a decent pen ('Oh Christ! Here's Old Nibby again!' he hears a shopgirl say) makes a nice oblique case for intellectual masturbation. From the ants story, and similar tales of ingestion; from the relish with which food (especially breakfast) is described; and from the general disorganisation and pubbery, we may safely infer that Maurice himself was ferociously oral. He may also have been, like Buñuel, a mild foot-fetishist. At the end of an essay on his comrade the Rat (intermittent distaste for man involved a compensatory liking for the habits of man's more disgusting enemies) he complains about 'our neglect of the Foot, which we have allowed to degenerate into a mere means of locomotion, keeping it deformed in leather prisons.' Open prisons, of course, in Maurice's case.

His *Exploits of Engelbrecht*, a fiction about a 'dwarf surrealist boxer', is often recommended, but I have not read it; and since the fiction pieces in this book come chiefly in the form of spoofs, or autobiographical bits scarcely distinguishable in point-of-view from reportage, I cannot say whether Richardson's talents in this direction went seriously to waste. My impression is that he found the fantastications of real lives – Professor Dawkins, the wrestler Hackenschmidt, a 93-year-old burglar – enough to content him. Indeed, a reader who hadn't heard of Dawkins or Hackenschmidt before might be left wondering whether perhaps Richardson had invented them, as he invented Henry Nimmo, the Great Fireworks Critic. I doubt whether anyone ever came out of a Richardson profile sounding less interesting than they were in life. But Maurice's own character remains mysterious. Desperately attached to high-life (the Twenties seem to linger in people's souls even more tenaciously than the Thirties), he had the classically paradoxical political history, having hung on to the disreputable remnants of Stalinist Utopianism well into wartime. I think it may be that he liked to think of himself as a slippery customer, like his lifelong Freudian pal the eel.

Richard Dawkins

Brute Beasts

Animal Rights: A Symposium edited by David Paterson and Richard D. Ryder *Centaur Press* £6.50.

Campaigners for animal rights are good for a laugh, in the same kind of way as suffragettes used to be. The parallel is an uncomfortably close one. The reader of *Animal Rights* will certainly encounter some painful nonsense; but it would be a mistake to dismiss the whole enterprise on that account. It is a militantly partisan book, and makes no pretence at being anything else, but bits of it are convincing and disturbing.

The 27 chapters constitute the proceedings of an RSPCA-sponsored symposium on the Ethical Aspects of Man's Relationships with Animals, held at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1977. The first chapter, by Richard Ryder, gives an all too fleeting glance at historical attitudes to animal welfare. Ryder, one of the editors of the book, long ago earned my admiration for his coining of the term *speciesism*, by analogy with racism and sexism. In their different ways, many of the contributors focus their attack on speciesism.

Section two contains four chapters on 'Religious and Theological Perspectives'. Jack Austin, in a humane and thoughtful piece on Buddhist attitudes, makes the valid point that quantitative half measures are better than no measures at all. You can do some good by eating a little less meat, even if you shrink from total vegetarianism. In the next chapter, Andrew Linzey ably documents the speciesism in Christian theology. This ranges from the smug nastiness of the *Catholic Dictionary* of 1897 – 'They [animals] have no rights. The brutes are made for man, who has the same right over them which he has over plants and stones' – to the mild fatuousness of the following, from John Hick in 1964, '. . . sub-human animals exist because they represent possible forms of being, and therefore of goodness, and because their existence is accordingly necessary to the fullness of the created world'. Hick's concept of 'necessity' is devoid of sensible post-Darwinian meaning, as is the very phrase 'sub-human animals' (compare 'sub-white races'). If theologians wish to know why animals, including humans, exist, they can read all about it in school biology textbooks.

Canon Eric Turnbull, in the second of two chapters on 'Animals and Moral Theology', seems pardonably uncomfortable about the Christian record on animals, and the embarrassing story of the Gadarene swine moves him to a charming posture of mingled apology and rationalisation. The next chapter, on 'Animal Rights and Nature Liberation', well deserves its place in the theological section of the book:

> In the formulation of a bio-spiritual ethic the objective evolutionary and ecological facts derived from science and the more subjective and empathetic views of philosophy and religion are complementary and mutually supportive. The objective and the subjective modes are integrated; at this new level of integration human consciousness will enter a new cosmic cycle at a much higher vibration of co-creative harmony.

Teilhard de Chardin could not have put it more lucidly.

It is a relief to turn to the clear and honest reasoning of Brigid Brophy, reasoning tinged with a passion that is the more impressive for being controlled. If you do not bother to read any other chapters of this book, read hers on 'The Darwinist's Dilemma'. Most of the important issues come up in her admirably compact ten pages. The rest of the section on 'Philosophical Perspectives' is dominated by some relevant logic-chopping by professional moral philosophers, Tom Regan, T. L. S. Sprigge, Stephen R. L. Clark and R. G. Frey. As some of the contributors stress, moral philosophers cannot dictate to us what is right or wrong, but they can catch us out in internal inconsistencies of logic. In the present context the outstanding inconsistency is, of course, speciesism. We are riddled with speciesism; we take it in with our mother's milk, it is enshrined in our customs, our politics, our language. Darwin notwithstanding, we learn to distinguish humans from 'animals', as though a chimpanzee was closer to a mouse or an amoeba than to a man. I am reminded of the Kingsley Amis hero who shrank from a trip to 'abroad' because he had never before visited 'the region'.

It is not necessarily speciesist to accord humans special rights because they have special qualities. What is racist is to discriminate against somebody *because* of the race to which he belongs. Humans are, on average, cleverer than chimpanzees, but some chimps are cleverer than some people. If we decide, for some reason, that clever beings deserve more rights than less clever ones, it is speciesist to prefer human vegetables, foetuses or congenital idiots over normal chimpanzees. I am not saying it is wrong, just that it is speciesist. Maybe speciesism is right, but in that case perhaps racism is too, or sexism. There may be genuinely good grounds for discriminating in favour of humans, but if you think those grounds are self-evident you should probably think again. The philosophical centre of this book will help. It may not convert us, but it will be a virtue if it makes us aware of our speciesism, just as the women's liberation movement has sensitised us to the sexism that is built into our language. And sensitisation may be the first step towards conversion. It is not long since decent liberal-minded white intellectuals accepted that women and black people were self-evidently inferior, deserving of kindness but having few rights of their own.

The second half of the book is dominated by 'Three Major Areas of Concern, Farming, Wildlife, and Experimentation'. Again the quality of the chapters is mixed. I was pleased that our farming methods and carnivorous diet received at least as much critical attention as the use of animals in scientific experiments. Scientists are easy victims of hypocritical indignation, because rather few of us are scientists while most of us are consumers of cheap battery-farm produce. To be sure, scientists sometimes hurt their animals, but it is convincingly arguable that farms and abattoirs harbour much more suffering than laboratories. What is more, some may think it relevant that, if we discount the infamous cosmetic experiments, laboratory animals suffer in a better cause than farm animals.

I shall keep this book chiefly as a source of quotations. Of two that stick in my memory, the first is used by Richard Ryder to open the book:

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> The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those *rights* which never could have been withheld from them but by the hand of tyranny . . . The question is not can they *reason*? Nor, can they *talk*? But, can they *suffer*? (Jeremy Bentham, 1780).

The second quotation is from a Master of Fox Hounds, the sort of MFH who, if he did not exist, would surely have to be invented: 'Horse-whipping a hunt-saboteur is rather like beating a wife. They are both private matters.' Well, you have to admit it is not speciesist.

James Grant

Near Myth

Beast and Man by MARY MIDGLEY *Harvester* £8.50
What it Means to be Human edited by Ross Fitzgerald *Pergamon* £11.55 and £6.60

Thinking about our 'human nature' has always involved thinking about our relation to other animals, and so when we misunderstand animals we often misunderstand ourselves as well. This is true whether we deny our affinity with animals or acknowledge it. Descartes denied any close affinity when he claimed that animals were simply mechanical, but this view was merely the obverse of his dualistic conception of a person as an inexplicable union of mechanical body and immaterial mind. More traditional thinking recognised a closer affinity, but only by means of a distortion: repudiated human characteristics were projected on to animals. Thus when, in *King Lear*, Poor Tom catalogues his vices 'Hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness,' he acknowledges that he is an animal, but in an idiom that ensures that the recognition takes the form of self-contempt.

Beast and Man, Mary Midgley's first book, explores and criticises these and other ways in which misconceptions about animals have underlain misunderstandings about ourselves. She argues that the common assumption that animals do not possess language in fact hinders our understanding of language by leading us to overlook the way in which spoken language is founded in a system of gestural symbolism. Likewise, the presupposition that animals are entirely irrational encourages a false conception of rationality as a regime imposed by conscious cerebration upon chaotic, unstructured instincts. Midgley shows how ethology, the study of animal behaviour, can aid social science by helping it to criticise those myths in terms of which we think about ourselves.

But Midgley also makes a more ambitious claim for ethology, that it can help us differentiate those of our needs and desires which are not culturally conditioned, but are innate components of 'human nature'. By this means, ethology can advance our moral thinking, for to see a desire as fundamental to human nature, Midgley argues, is to see its satisfaction as a form of good.

As an instance, she cites the desire for privacy. While allowing that this desire, as found in our society, is culturally mediated in various ways, she claims that it has at its core an instinct – the aversion to being stared at by strangers – which ethology has discovered to exist in all social animals. This discovery, she maintains, shows us that the desire for privacy is not entirely a cultural product, but is based in an instinct which is an ineliminable part of our nature and which therefore demands moral respect.

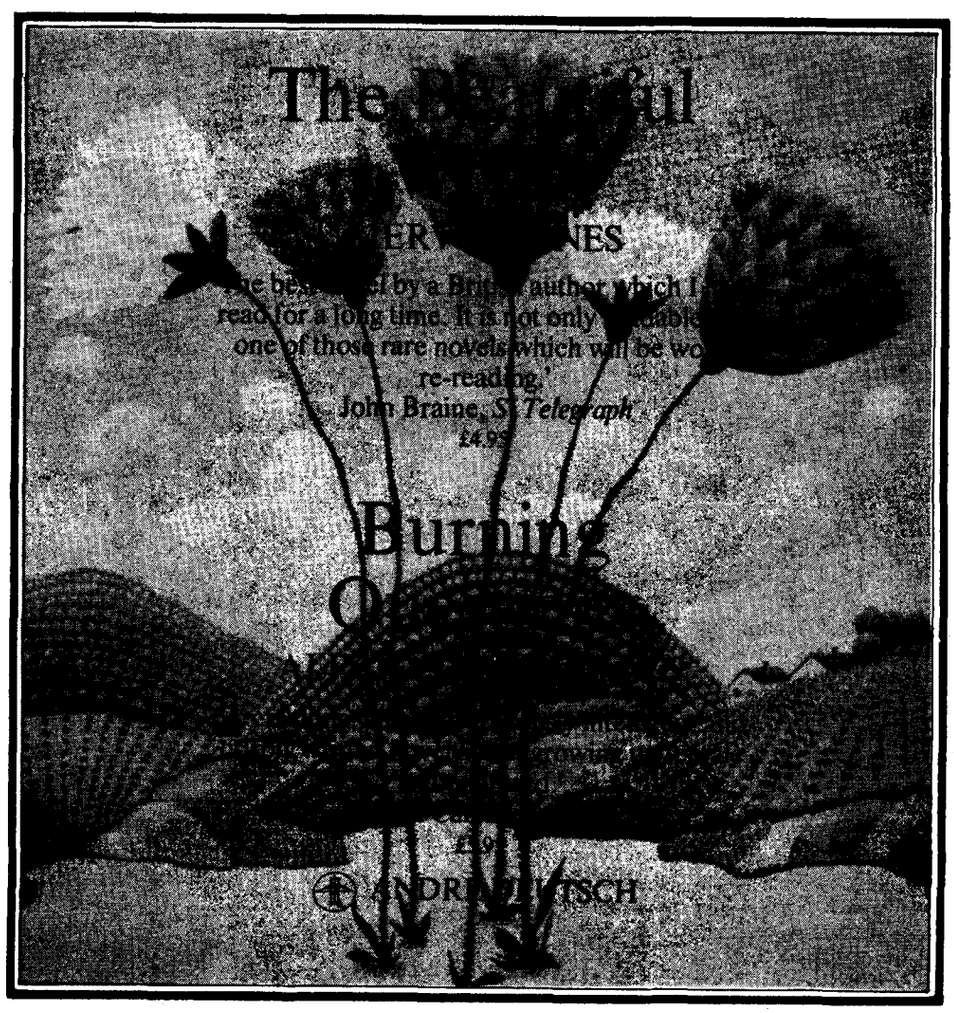
Midgley's employment, at this point in her argument, of the distinction between what is natural and what is cultural seems to me at odds with one of the central insights of her book, which is that an individual desire is not an isolated atom of behavioural disposition, but owes its meaning and importance to its place within the total structure of the subject's other motivations. Humans are averse to being stared at by strangers, when they are, because staring is often a prelude to other things they are averse to: for example, insults, criticisms, unwanted sexual advances, or demands for money. So the aversion is natural, in the sense that, given the circumstances of life, it has a point. But so many of the circumstances which give the aversion its point are general facts about social life that it's difficult to see how it can be denominated 'natural', as against 'cultural'.

Midgley's general philosophical account of the way in which ethology can advance our moral thinking is thus less persuasive than her critique of particular misconceptions about animals. All the same, it is the book's philosophical dimension which gives *Beast and Man* its value. The author is a professional philosopher, but unlike some of her academic colleagues, she discusses philosophical issues in a way that makes clear how they relate to one another, and why they are important.

A central feature of Midgley's book is its decisive rejection of the view, dating back to Hume, that we can theorise about people and society without making any moral evaluations. A similar scepticism about the fact-value distinction evidently informs *What it Means to be Human*, for the point of the title's ambiguity is surely to suggest that to define the meaning of the word 'human' is at the same time to define the meaning of human life in an ethical sense. The book, edited by Ross Fitzgerald, is a collection of essays written by an assortment of social scientists, literary critics and philosophers, most of whom display an agility in moving from facts to values which would make Hume's head spin.

Some contributors in traditional philosophical style attempt to locate the 'essence' of being human. Ross Fitzgerald cites freedom, David E. Cooper cites language (he calls his view 'loquentialism'). Others, perhaps reflecting on their own predicament, focus on the human capacity to ask and answer questions about human nature. Most interesting are those pieces, like David Holbrook's on changing conceptions of knowledge and science, which do not attempt a full-dress answer to the question contained in the title, but deal with some concrete issue related to it.

Something I found missing from both these books was any investigation of the social determinants of our thinking about human nature. We are by now familiar with the way in which systems of morality can exist because



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they serve the interests of social structures which do not serve our interests. If social science is necessarily an evaluative enterprise, because it must employ concepts which have normative force, then we need to make ourselves aware of the way in which social pressures condition the evaluations we presuppose when we attempt to theorise about ourselves. Such self-consciousness does not undermine moral thinking, but rather enables it to be critical of its spontaneous intuitions, in much the same way that optics enables physical science to be critical of its own observational evidence.

Gillian Wilce

Blood Lust

Slaughter of the Innocent by HANS RUESCH *Futura* £1.25
My Head Against the Wall: A Decade in the Fight Against Blood Sports by VERA SHEPPARD *Moonraker Press* £4.95
Pirate Whaling by L. A. CARTER *The People's Trust for Endangered Species, 19 Quarry Street, Guildford*

A live fox-cub torn apart by hounds, laboratory animals blinded, mutilated, burnt or castrated, still-living whales inflated with compressed-air lances – of course descriptions of these things are affecting, and provoke questions about the pleasure and profit to be found in them. A theme common to these three works of propaganda, and perhaps their most important one, is the extent to which the pain and destruction of animals are kept going by power and money (drug company profits, whale-meat sales, a spot of influence where it matters).

After money, Hans Ruesch believes, sadism is the main motive for vivisection. It is not hard to make the recounting of things done to animals in laboratories very shocking indeed, but Mr Ruesch dissipates his own effects by being far too long and repetitive and having an all-too-obvious hot-line to the cuttings library. A few select words from anti-vivisectionist scientists might have been telling, but 110 consecutive quotations prove merely stultifying. Even more doubt-breeding, however, are his high-handed way with an unsupported generalisation and his cavalier attitude to fact. 'Any dunce can cut up live animals' is a typical example. Or '. . . the trait [bearing pain and discomfort poorly] is common to all vivisectors'. Or 'newborn humans have little or no sensitivity even at 6 months'.

In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* Jung says 'I realised that one had to experiment on animals, but the demonstration of such experiments nevertheless seemed to me horrible, barbarous and above all unnecessary.' Quoting the last six words of this, Hans Ruesch states that *because of* his revulsion Jung gave up medicine for psychology. Not so. He merely skipped the demonstrations and went right on to complete his medical training before deciding to specialise in psychiatry. This may seem a carping point, but it is actually crucial, for any departure from truth and accuracy in the furtherance of a cause, perhaps particularly of a 'good' cause, is dangerous. More practically, it serves Mr Ruesch's own cause ill, for it greatly diminishes his credibility. However interesting, for example, the claim that no major medical advances have depended on the use of animals, how can one trust his evidence? Similarly, the venom which he consistently expresses towards all vivisectionist scientists negates his reasonable proposition that compassion for animals is not divisible from compassion for all things living.

Vera Sheppard, too, feels strongly about all who hunt. Their faces seem to her marked by the blood lust which motivates them. Otherwise, her book is less lurid than Hans Ruesch's and there is no reason to query her accuracy in detailing ten years of placard-bearing vigils and battles with the BBC and RSPCA. What is debatable is how far it will hold the reader who is not already involved. She shares Hans Ruesch's belief that what she tells you many times over must be convincing. Whereas, actually, the impact of a piece of information – like the fact that foxes are bred specially for hunting – lies in the first time of saying not the tenth. A large part of the problem is Mrs Sheppard's less-than-gripping narrative device of including the full texts of her speeches and letters.

It is a relief to turn to the brief, factual paragraphs of a report (for the attention of the International Whaling Commission) on pirate whaling, in which one ship can account for 40 whales in a six-week trip. Hard work lurks in the background, and maybe just a touch of adventure too, but the report is refreshingly dry and unhistrionic, with its itemised discoveries (nothing extended beyond certainty) and careful tables. The author is a realist. 'Whale conservation', he says, 'is unlikely to be among the priority concerns of brokers, agents and underwriters who, humanly enough, have priorities of their own.' But he is hopeful of persuading them to stop insuring rogue whalers using flags of convenience.

Pirate Whaling is a technical report, not a book. It does not aim to elicit emotion, to preach, convert or express the writer's feelings. Consequently, it leaves you thinking about whaling. In spite of Hans Ruesch's and Vera Sheppard's evident sincerity, their books leave you musing not so much on the sufferings of animals as on the nature of campaigners on their behalf.

Geoffrey Grigson

August near the Beauce

Wind sways pink of Summer
Tamarisk against the blue.
Drowsy, after an indigestive night,
I point this out to you.
'Perhaps,' I say, 'in love, at Blois,
This was a sight
Which Wordsworth knew.'
'Or Zola taking notes,' you add,
At Cloyes.'
Dwelling on this I disregard the view,
The wind-swayed pink of Summer
Tamarisk against the blue.

Geoffrey Robertson

Trial by Television

Fraud: The Amazing Career of Doctor Savundra by JON CONNELL and DOUGLAS SUTHERLAND *Hodder & Stoughton* £6.50

As Polly Peachum told the McHeath gang, you can either rob a bank or rob the public with a bank. Emil Savundra was a crook who took the latter course, investing the insurance premiums of 400,000 family motorists in an off-shore repository which, when stripped of its gnomic Liechtenstein lawyers, turned out to be his own capacious pocket. As frauds go now, Savundra's crime was neither very big nor particularly clever: but the style of this black fat-cat, who stalked 'the poor dim British' while silencing their watchdogs with a mixture of personal charm and legal chains, is worth a belated remembrance.

At first blush Savundra seems a romantic and even swashbuckling figure. He made his first dishonest million from a non-existent arms deal to blockaded Red China, donating half the proceeds to found a monastery in Ceylon where nuns would pray devotedly for the success of his subsequent frauds. His next venture was a particularly heartless confidence trick (pocketing $850,000 instead of applying it for wheat shipments to relieve a famine in Goa) for which he received a five-year prison sentence in Brussels in 1956, following a much-publicised extradition from this country.

But the nuns had not prayed in vain: Vatican intercession secured his immediate release, and he flew from Belgium direct to the bosom of Cardinal Montini (later Pope Paul VI). 'Christian charity recommends to take care of people in need of help' explains one Catholic dignitary in defence of his church's extraordinary role in springing Savundra, and it seems that further benefits of clergy were extended in the form of accreditation and rehabilitation when the prodigal son returned to Britain in search of fun and profit. In the Sixties, between frauds, he had his back massaged by Stephen Ward and his sexual needs serviced by Mandy Rice-Davies; he befriended Lord Lucan, and went power-boating with Donald Campbell and Sir Max Aitken. It was just the environment for a man whose career was based on the premise that nothing succeeds like excess.

The most interesting section of this well-researched book is its unravelling of the early history of the Fire, Auto and Marine Insurance Co. Ltd. After his role in the Shiv Kapoor fraud on the Costa Rica Government (real coffee in return for non-existent payments) went unprosecuted, Savundra spied a genuine business 'growth area' in cheap automobile insurance. With the help of another convicted criminal and a suspected gun-runner, he established FAM and then set about providing it with an air of respectability. Clubland soon supplied the stuff of which letterheads are made – impoverished aristocrats and retired naval officers who turned a blind eye to his

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criminal record in return for a boost to the pension and an open-ended expense account. Motoring and financial journalists, who should have warned their public of the dangers of doing business with a team of crooks and nincompoops, maintained a disgraceful silence: Savundra's sensational extradition ten years before was conveniently forgotten after FAM's publicity coup of installing an IBM computer which claimed to provide 'a policy in 67 seconds'.

The Board of Trade knew all about the bogus doctor, but its hands were tied: 'if Savundra has any fraudulent or unethical plans', one investigator concluded, 'they are not in evidence at the moment.' Increasingly in evidence, however, were his journeys to Zurich and Liechtenstein, and his investment of company assets in an offshore bank of dubious origins. When the auditors asked questions, they were fobbed off with forged stock certificates. The authorities, like the motoring public, were dazzled by cash flow and computers. The Press was wooed with free lunches and cowed by libel writs. Meanwhile Savundra, the expert forger with a gift for social insinuation, plundered a successful business by the conventional criminal method of uttering fake securities.

After the fall, Savundra cried racial prejudice – an odd claim from one who had smugly announced, in his heyday, that 'the worst insurance risks are coloured drivers'. If anything, he had benefited unduly from the city's desire to avoid any suggestion of discrimination against immigrants who had the correct commercial instincts. Undoubtedly the colour of the 'roly-poly Ceylonese' helped stir public hysteria after the collapse, but by that stage the evidence was so damning that its mere recital earned David Frost his pre-Nixon reputation as television's answer to Patrick Hastings.

The Old Bailey trial turned out a lacklustre affair: like most villains up against the facts, Savundra tried to shift the blame to his co-defendant, with the predictable result that both were convicted. His heart condition, which re-appeared so conveniently throughout his life whenever he needed an excuse to adjourn legal proceedings, returned to reserve him a comfortable place in Wormwood Scrubs hospital, where he was entrusted with keeping the prison accounts. He died shortly after release, and his only lasting epitaph has been the judgment at his appeal, which survives to haunt the media with its condemnation of Frost's 'Trial by Television' and its warning that the contempt laws apply whenever criminal charges are 'imminent'.

This must surely be the great irony of the Savundra story. Convicted of one serious fraud and known to have been involved in others, he cajoled and bullied the press into a silence which enabled him to work unmolested for years. When his calculated bid for self-justification came unstuck on the Frost programme, his lawyers complained and the Court reacted by strengthening the laws against public exposure of villainy. 'Trial by newspaper' is a favourite bogey-phrase among barristers, but it can come a lot closer to the truth, and much more quickly, than trial by lawyers. The truly amazing aspect of *The Amazing Career of Doctor Savundra* is that so much of it is being published for the first time in 1979 as a matter of historical interest, rather than in 1964 as a matter of urgent concern.

David Lodge

Inside/Outside

The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative by FRANK KERMODE *Harvard* £5.50

Meaning and Signs in Fiction by ALAN KENNEDY *Macmillan* £10

Interpretation is a highly controversial topic in modern literary theory. In Anglo-American critical discourse there is a debate of long standing between those who believe it is possible and necessary to ascertain by positivist historical research what the author of a given text meant by it, and those who claim the freedom to coax from a text whatever meaning its verbal structure and texture will yield. In structuralist and post-structuralist thought this latter position has developed two more extreme and, in a sense, opposed variants. Theorists of a formalist and scientific bent argue that since interpretation is endless, literary research should confine itself to identifying the systems by which meaning is generated and perceived, examining competence rather than performance, *langue* rather than *parole*; while others rejoice in the undecidability of literary texts and regard authors or critics who try to limit plurality of meaning as instruments of ideological repression.

Frank Kermode, urbanely familiar with all these viewpoints and methodologies, has had the bold and brilliant idea of testing them against a uniquely interesting text which has been strenuously interpreted for nearly 2,000 years, though seldom by literary critics: namely, the New Testament, and particularly the gospel of St Mark. Mark is, by general scholarly agreement, the earliest of the synoptic gospels, and therefore the most likely to provide an authentic record of the historical Jesus.

However, it is also a very problematical text, with many odd and puzzling features which become fully apparent only when it is read through as a single narrative. It is in consideration of these *cruces*, and of biblical scholars' response to them, that Kermode finds instructive parallels to the processes involved in the interpretation of literary texts. Thus, the surprising insistence of Mark's Christ that his parables are designed to baffle the uninitiated is compared to the institutionalised obscurity of modern literature. The ingenious and sometimes desperate efforts of biblical scholars to explain Mark's reference to the young disciple who fled naked at Christ's arrest, leaving his shirt (*sindón*) in the hands of his would-be captors, is compared to the reluctance of Joycean commentators to accept that the mysterious Man in the Macintosh in *Ulysses* might be a wholly superfluous and meaningless intruder into the narrative. The disconcertingly abrupt and downbeat 'original' ending of Mark at 16.8, which leaves the women at the empty tomb too frightened to tell a soul, and the addition by a later scribe of the last 12 verses about the resurrected Jesus, illustrate the narrative needs and expectations involved in our 'sense of an ending'.

As Kermode lucidly demonstrates, scholarly efforts to explain or 'recuperate' such textual enigmas tend towards either a reductive historicism (e.g., the suggestion that the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen reflects the resentment of Galilean farmers towards their absentee foreign landlords), or an essentially 'literary' tracing of thematic and narrative motifs, echoes and allusions (e.g., the parallels between the young disciple in the story of Christ's arrest, the young man in a white *sindón* whom the women find guarding the empty tomb, and Joseph in the Old Testament who fled from Potiphar's wife, leaving his cloak in her hands). Kermode makes it clear that he finds the latter approach more persuasive and satisfying, partly because he thinks the gospels were composed in the code of narrative rather than of chronicle: events in the New Testament are evidently designed to chime instructively with events in the Old; narrative needs (for a Betrayer and Judge of the Hero) generate characters (Judas and Pilate) who in turn generate more narrative (Judas is more developed in Matthew and John than in Mark).

For Christian commentators, of course, this is thin ice, since the more literary the structure of a narrative is shown to be, the less likely we are to accept it as 'transparent upon historical reality'. But, as Kermode points out, modern historiography itself will not pass this truth test. He himself writes as a declared 'secular' critic, yet in the end he seems more dejected than are most Christians by the discovery that the truth about the historical Jesus is irrecoverable, not (to borrow a metaphor from Conrad) inside the gospels like a kernel, but 'outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze'. Kermode accepts the infinite plurality of interpretation, whatever kind of text is in question, but for him this acceptance is tragic, since we interpret over and over again in quest of a truth that we know is unobtainable. 'World and book, it may be, are hopelessly plural, endlessly disappointing,' he elegaically concludes. *The Genesis of Secrecy*, however, does not disappoint. It is exactly what one expects from Professor Kermode: elegant, incisive, expert and original. What could not have been predicted is that it would make the New Testament as interesting to the literary critic as Joyce or Kafka.

Meaning and Signs in Fiction does, alas, disappoint, and explains why the infinite interpretability of world and book weighs on Kermode's spirits. Once interpretation ceases to be very interesting – ceases, that is, to address itself to real hermeneutic questions, stalking the ever-elusive quarry, 'truth' – then it becomes very boring, not so much because it seems wrong (interpretation is difficult to falsify) as because it seems superfluous. Mr Kennedy describes his aim as 'to demonstrate that the history of the novel is a history of individual human agency in the act of achieving structure', a formula so vague and general that it would apply to any cultural phenomenon whatsoever. He tries to give it more definition by a series of analogies and oppositions based on clothing: language as the

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dress of thought, society as clothing for the self, literal clothes and their wearers, and so on.

> Without the active infusion of subjective meaning into the signs, or clothes, from inside, the very forms which make human life possible become cannibalistic and, like the shirt of Nessus, burn their way inwards, devouring subjectivity.

This quotation may give the flavour of Mr Kennedy's idiosyncratic mixture of old-fashioned moral criticism and semiotic jargon. Since clothing is an important index of character or status in realistic fiction, he is able to find a fair number of passages, in the classic 19th-century novels he is mainly concerned with, which seem to justify his approach. Of course, he leaves out a great deal, but as Kermode wryly observes,

> sometimes it appears that the history of interpretation may be thought of as a history of exclusions, which enable us to seize upon this issue rather than on some others as central, and choose from among the remaining mass only what seems compliant.

What Alan Kennedy excludes, however, is not merely inconvenient data, but the basic categories and processes of narrative itself – plot, character, temporality, point of view, etc., which constitute it as a semiotic system. Without explicit attention to these things, Kennedy's pursuit of the theme of personal authenticity could never provide the basis for a comprehensive history of the novel, still less for the 'poetics of fiction' promised by the blurb. The interest of the book therefore inheres principally in seeing how far Mr Kennedy can get in stretching his very weak thesis around his enormous subject – a hermeneutic problem entirely of his own making. He is a lively and enthusiastic reader, and there are bright ideas and shrewd perceptions to be found in his pages; but the overall impression is of complex works of verbal art being translated into language much clumsier, less subtle and less precise than their own, without this translation producing any compensatory yield of explanatory power.

Laurence Lerner
Implications

The implications of sunlight
Are everywhere: scarlet petals,
The brushed grey of the rocks,
All those greens, quietly rioting,
The hot streets, where a child
Walks, and I follow
Forty years behind.

He notices nothing, turns
Past the familiar names.

The mountain, the sea in its lap,
The sun on the stark rock,
Hibiscus, poinsettia, tear
Fibres that ache with disuse.
I long for his unwashed eyes.

I look up: the same air,
The same scarlet announcements,
The huge sea flecked with sunlight,
The same insistent mountain,
The same child climbing slowly,
The years like rocks above him
In the ubiquitous sun.

Jeremy Tambling
Nature Study

People and Weather by P. J. KAVANAGH *John Calder* £2.50
Our England is a Garden by J. I. M. STEWART *Gollancz* £4.95
The Grand Dragon by IRMA KURTZ *Hutchinson* £5.50
The 65th Tape by FRANK ROSS *Macmillan* £5.95

P. J. Kavanagh's new novel is described in the blurb as belonging to a genre called the 'nature novel' – a questionable and rather unhelpful category. It concerns a writer, William, who has written about old country ways, and who lives out a retirement in the country with his wife Beryl. She is unable to sympathise, nervous, and needing mental treatment. The reason is that she regards nature and life as something indifferent to her: there was an incident once when she was terrified by the wind. William, prompted by Simone Weil's 'the world is God's language to us', sees this indifference as evidence of the character of God whom he reveres; he senses that the important thing is to get a feeling of the otherness and superiority of the non-human world: 'I love it because it doesn't love me. It is more interesting than I am.'

But William is no Simone Weil, his thinking on these and related points about the importance of life is less than impressive. When we read about an old villager's life, 'so uneventful in the ordinary sense, without change or movement, its apparent pointlessness raised interesting religious questions, no, not questions, points' – we assume that the discussion of such points is to be the book's theme. Yet nothing positive emerges: the presumable 'extraordinary sense' of a life being eventful doesn't really come across. We may gather that 'most of the people William knew behaved as though life were admirable, though they never said so, possibly from fear of being thought soft-headed'; and we are invited to reject, as William's friend, Edward, cannot, a quotation of Simone de Beauvoir ('Happiness a snare when the world is a horrid place'), but the sense of achieved fulfilment, of content, is hardly there. Instead, we get a kind of sub-Larkin rejection of 'the strong tastes our imaginations pretend to crave' and a certain refusal to think:

> He felt the need to define happiness, but rejected it because, after all, de Beauvoir hadn't bothered, and she's already wasted enough of his time. What he had in mind was the animal response of one's life to the life of the world around it, a source of understanding, a grace.

Can you be *that* evasive? When Kavanagh talks about ordinary lives he slides into assuming that they are contented without questioning what criterion of value makes him say this, and that his 'animal response' produces a 'grace' in a way that is too pat. Compare the response to nature here with Wordworth's – where there's so clearly a commitment to the imagination creating the world and making something intelligible out of our lived space. ***People and Weather*** makes pleasant reading; it is carefully done, even if some of the descriptions are determinedly all-inclusive.

Kavanagh sees William as becoming more and more isolated in the modern world, out of step with his time. J. I. M. Stewart's compilation of stories, *Our England is a Garden*, also charts the loss of certain English values the author clearly prizes. The title story deals with the decline in the fortunes of a country house and the class changes involved in this. Lord Childrey, after long residence in Ridings, dies in World War II; Lady Childrey we leave in senility in an old people's home. The cook's son, Jim Speke, has become the owner of the house, though, too melodramatically, he loses it all: the new order, we gather, has no advantages over the old. This is the most considerable piece in the collection (over 100 pages): though there is sharp observation of the past social order, it doesn't question enough past or present, so that the paradise-lost suggestion (reinforced by the Kipling-quoting title) comes across as too much of a cliché. Stewart seems unwilling to face the present: when we are told, in the second story (about a don invited to write his autobiography), that 'the best English memoirs, after all, had been written long ago, and he had read pretty well every one of them while still an undergraduate', the implicit attitude is that Culture belongs to the past. No wonder Stewart's Professor Mannering notices that 'a tremendous amount of nonsense is written about literature, even more than is written about history'. We know what literature is, dammit: you read it when you're an undergraduate, and it's not good form to question standards or values. Such attitudes predominate in Stewart's fiction – attitudes too conventional and received to really begin to test your own thinking and prejudices.

Nonetheless, Stewart's fairly cool and civilised line is preferable to that of the two novels dealing with America. Irma Kurtz's is about a Jewish journalist researching the Ku Klux Klan, who becomes involved with the leader, the Grand Dragon. It reads like a rather slow piece of wish fulfilment, where the Grand Dragon himself is irresistible to women ('he drove a Cadillac, a new one, and he drove it brilliantly'), dominating ('the whole world is his living room') and with conventional machismo and charisma ('his suntanned hands opened and I saw three lines – heart, life and head – etched, strong, ambitious and ruthless'). Of course, he's an utter Fascist, too, with a nice line in what really happened to six million Jews, and what he'd do to them, thus presenting the heroine with a pretty moral dilemma when she's attracted to him. There are some good Jewish jokes in the book, some wry observations: otherwise it's all predictable and unreal.

Kurtz's book at least has a point of view which deserves respect at times. *The 65th Tape*, all about a gang called the Matrix who were involved in the Kennedys' and Luther King's assassinations, and are now trying to put their own puppet on Capitol Hill, really has little to commend it. Written in a hyper-active and hyper-virile prose that makes you 'throw yourself' on to a couch, 'kill the kettle', or 'clamp' your mouth shut, it also includes a nasty whitewash of Nixon (America's saviour, naught he did in malice, etc). It seems to prove that when you sacrifice human values in your writing for the sake of mere entertainment, you do so at the risk of presenting just those conventional and stultifying non-truths that it's art's business to demolish.

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July Books

A selection of books published during the month of July and received by the NEW STATESMAN

Note: inclusion in this list does not preclude the possibility of a future review.

Art, Architecture and Design

ANTHONY BLUNT **The Drawings of Poussin** *Yale* £18.50. An assessment of Poussin's graphic achievement, with copious black-and-white illustrations.

GEOFFROY MILLAIS **Sir John Everett Millais** *Academy Editions* £7.95 and £4.95. A selection from the family collection chosen by the artist's great-grandson. Sixteen of the 80 pages are in colour.

ERIC SHANES **Turner's Picturesque Views in England and Wales 1825-1838** *Chatto & Windus* £12.95. Andrew Wilton introduces and Eric Shanes analyses this series of nearly 100 watercolours reproduced together here for the first time in almost 150 years.

Autobiography and Letters

GEORGE GORDON BYRON **In the Wind's Eye: Letters and Journals, Vol. 9, 1821-22** *John Murray* £7.50. Edited by Leslie A. Marchand, this volume covers Byron's stay in Pisa and Leghorn.

EDWARD FITZGERALD **Fitzgerald to His Friends** *Scolar Press* £10.95 and £4.95. A selection of Fitzgerald's letters edited and introduced by Alethea Hayter.

CHARLES HANNAN **Almost An Englishman** *Deutsch* £3.95. A fictionalised autobiography about the author's adolescence as a wartime refugee.

RAYMOND MASSEY **A Hundred Different Lives** *Robson* £7.50. The actor's illustrated autobiography.

LEWIS MUMFORD **My Works and Days: A Personal Chronicle** *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich* £8.95. An autobiographical work drawn from letters, journals and unpublished as well as published essays.

OSBERT SITWELL **Tales My Father Taught Me** *Michael Joseph* £6.50. Re-issue of collected anecdotes 'left over' from his five-volume autobiography and first published in 1962.

Biography

ANNE CHISHOLM **Nancy Cunard** *Sidgwick & Jackson* £8.50. A life story based on Nancy Cunard's letters and other writings and interviews with her friends.

MICHAEL DARLOW & GILLIAN HODSON **Terence Rattigan: The Man and His Work** *Quartet* £11.95. An authorised account, including re-appraisal of Rattigan's work; bibliography, original cast lists.

GEOFFREY GOODMAN **The Awkward Warrior: Frank Cousins, His Life and Times** *Davis-Poynter* £15. A substantial book by the Industrial Editor of the *Daily Mirror*.

ELIZABETH LONGFORD **A Pilgrimage of Passion: The Life of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt** *Weidenfeld* £8.95. The first biography to be based on Blunt's own *Secret Memoirs*, embargoed for 50 years.

AXEL MADSEN **John Huston** *Robson* £5.95. By the author of several previous film biographies.

EDMUND MORRIS **The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt** *Collins* £8.50. A fully annotated account of Roosevelt's life from 1858 until he became Vice-President in 1901.

PAT ROGERS **Henry Fielding** *Elek* £8.95. This first biography of Fielding for over 25 years includes material from newly discovered letters.

MERLIN THOMAS **Louis-Ferdinand Céline** *Faber* £10. A biographical study of Céline's language and thought, including extensive translated quotations from his writings.

JOEL VANCE **Fats Waller: His Life and Times** *Robson* £5.50. A popular, illustrated biography.

DAVID WILLIAMS **Genesis and Exodus** *Hamish Hamilton* £8.95. An account of the life of Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1882-1896, and the fates of his six children.

Fiction

JAMES T. FARRELL **Studs Lonigan** *Secker* £9.95. Re-issue of his classic trilogy.

RUMER GODDEN **Five for Sorrow, Ten for Joy** *Macmillan* £5.95. A story of nuns in a French order.

GÜN GÜNELI **Book of Trances** *Julian Friedmann* £4.50. 'A novel of magical recitals' dedicated to Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

EARL LOVELACE **The Dragon Can't Dance** *Deutsch* £4.95. A Trinidadian novel, set around carnival time in Port of Spain.

PHILIP MASON **Skinner of Skinner's Horse** *Deutsch* £5.95. Fiction based on the life of James Skinner, born 1778, excluded from the British army in India because of his mixed birth and eventually founder of his own regiment, Skinner's Horse.

JOSÉ J. VEIGA **The Three Trials of Manirema** *Peter Owen* £5.75. A fable centring on mysterious visits by strangers to a small Latin American town.

History

ASA BRIGGS **Iron Bridge to Crystal Palace: Impact and Images of the Industrial Revolution** *Thames & Hudson* £7.50. The growth of industrial technology and the engineers, businessmen, workers involved. Very thoroughly illustrated.

FRANCES FINNEGAN **Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitution in York** *Cambridge* £9.75. Based on reports of magistrates' proceedings, work-house records, Quarter Sessions lists, etc.

BERNARD WASSERSTEIN **Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939-1945** *Oxford* £7.95. Britain's complacency and blindness as revealed by archives in Britain, Israel and the USA.

ROBERT WOOD **A Word in Your Ear: The Broadcasting of an Era, 1923-64** *Macmillan* £6.95. The author, who died recently, worked for the BBC from the earliest days.

THEODORE ZELDIN **Politics and Anger: France 1848-1945** *Oxford* £2.95. The first of five paperbacks to be derived from Theodore Zeldin's major French history. It includes a new preface, epilogue and guide to further reading.

Literary Criticism

GARY LANE (Ed.) **Sylvia Plath** *Johns Hopkins University* £6.95. A collection of essays containing 'new views on the poetry'.

SIMON STUART **New Phoenix Wings: Reparation in Literature** *Routledge* £8.95. A Kleinian interpretation of literature, concentrating particularly on Blake, Wordsworth and Shakespeare.

Poetry

W.H. AUDEN **Selected Poems** *Faber* £6.50. A new selection (about 100 poems) made by Auden's literary executor, Edward Mendelson.

THOMAS HARDY **The Complete Poems** *Macmillan* £30. The first complete variorum edition.

JON SILKIN (Ed.) **First World War Poetry** *Penguin* £5.95 and £1.25. A collection of the familiar and the less familiar, with some translations from German and French and a long introduction.

Politics and Current Affairs

ROBERT H. CONNERY & GERALD BENJAMIN **Rockefeller of New York: Executive Power in the State-house** *Cornell University* £10.50. An examination of the Rockefeller administration, 1959-1973.

CHRISTOPHER DOBSON & RONALD PAYNE **The Weapons of Terror: International Terrorism at Work** *Macmillan* £7.95. A largely factual account of terrorist organisations, their methods, their members, their weapons.

JAMES E. DORNAN Jr (Ed.) **United States National Security Policy in the Decade Ahead** *Macdonald & Jane's* £12. Thirteen commentators analyse America's present position in world affairs and give their prescriptions for future action.

MICHAEL ELLMANN **Socialist Planning** *Cambridge* £15 and £4.95. An introduction to socialist economic planning, covering theory and practice in Comecon countries and China.

BEN FINE & LAWRENCE HARRIS **Re-reading 'Capital'** *Macmillan* £7.95 and £3.50. A study of modern Marxist economics in the light of Marx's own method.

PIERRE FRANK **The Fourth International; The Long March of the Trotskyists** *Ink Links* £3.50. Account of the 40 years of the Fourth International by a member of its United Secretariat. An expanded version of the first English translation published in 1972.

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CARSTEN HOLBRAAD **Superpowers and International Conflict** *Macmillan* £12. Examines the conduct of the superpowers in the past, especially in four major crises of the Fifties and Sixties.

KARL MARX & FREDERIC ENGELS **Collected Works, Vol. 11, 1851-1853** *Lawrence & Wishart* £5. Eleventh volume of a 50-volume series. Includes Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and Engels's *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*.

Social Questions and Philosophy

ROBERT COLES & JANE HALLOWEN COLES **Women of Crisis: Lives of Struggle and Hope** *Granada* £5.50. Descriptions of the lives of five American women.

PETER GORDON & JOHN WHITE **Philosophers as Educational Reformers** *Routledge* £9.95. Traces the influence of Idealism on British educational thought and practice.

SELMA GREENBERG **Right from the Start: A Guide to Non-Sexist Child-Rearing** *Gollancz* £5.50. A popular, practical account aimed mainly at parents.

ROBIN JENKINS **The Road to Alto** *Pluto* £3.95. Study of a small rural community in the Algarve and its relationship with the outside world.

DAVID WIDGERY **Health in Danger: The Crisis in the National Health Service** *Macmillan* £7.95 and £2.95. A GP describes the history of health care, analyses the NHS and looks at the threat of cuts.

Miscellaneous

SIR JOHN BETJEMAN **An Oxford University Chest** *Oxford* £2.50. A re-issue of his 1938 collection of prose sketches of Oxford life and architecture with photographs, line-drawings and etchings.

H.J. EYSENCK & GLENN WILSON **The Psychology of Sex** *Dent* £5.95. Fairly popular description of the results of their own and other people's researches, with questionnaires, etc.

ALISON FELL (Ed.) **Hard Feelings** *The Women's Press* £2.50. Fiction and poetry first published in *Spare Rib*.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Michael Kustow

Soft Words for Hard Times

Songbook by JULIAN MORE and MONTY NORMAN *Globe*
The Gin Game by D. L. COBURN *Lyric*
Scars by HESITATE AND DEMONSTRATE *ICA*

Songbook must be the first musical that refers to both the great Marcels (Duchamp for his *moustachioed Mona Lisa*, Proust because he's an irresistible rhyme with *seduced*) while persuading an audience that they've heard almost every song before, if only they could remember where. Julian More and Monty Norman's gleeful paean to the potency of cheap music has something for every kind of brow in the West End, from the in-crowd who know all about W. H. Allen showbiz biographies to the nostalgia-seekers chummily catered for by Radio 2.

Lifting the raconteur-plus-vocal-gems format which has filleted Sondheim, Coward and Porter for easy consumption, *Songbook* presents the *oeuvre* of Moony Shapiro, a Liverpool-born songwriter who cuts a path through showbiz and this century like some Candide of the keyboard. We see Moony in rapid snapshots: meeting 'Oscar, George, Ira' and other fellow pupils at the Shapiro Brooklyn piano academy; hitting Hollywood just as talkies begin; marrying and divorcing a starlet; crushed by the Crash; in Paris with the Gertrude Stein *galère*; marrying an English aristocrat with an astonishing resemblance to Jessica Mitford; snubbed by Hitler at the 1936 Olympics; volunteering for the British Army ('I'm going to fight for one of my countries'); writing adrenalin-pumping war-songs and a mellow GI ballad recorded by Sinatra ('When it's April in Wisconsin, and I'm sittin' here in Rome'); silenced by McCarthy.

More and Norman, seasoned songsmiths, hand-craft a Gershwin-style homage to Manhattan, a throbbing Depression number that might have rivalled 'Brother Can You Spare a Dime', a sprightly *java* about Les Halles, and a musky Dietrich-type scorcher which Moony filches from a song overheard in his PoW camp ('What's that they're playing, Fritz?' 'Das Mädchen am Fenster'). Melody, orchestrations, staging and lyrics – always just a shade cleverer than the originals – are unerringly judged: nostalgia is tempered by irony. A potted Oklahumoresque Fifties musical, *Happy Hickory*, with principals called Marvin and Rusty, makes way in the second act for a series of songs in which Moony and his creators test how serious popular music can get and still stay popular. Moony's post-McCarthy anti-racist *Red White and Black* is a flop, but yields one of the evening's most mysterious songs, a serene duet by two Korean girls about the lethal benevolence of Marshall Aid, like a cross between Adrian Mitchell and the Sondheim of *Pacific Overtures*. Moony draws the moral of his flop in a song proclaiming that 'messages are for Western Union' – an anthem of defeat later reconditioned into a Vietnam protest song. As opportunist as anyone in the music business, Moony bums a ride on the Beatles and recycles one of his golden oldies into a Eurovision hit.

In its home straight, *Songbook* reaches beyond pastiche. 'Don't Play That Lovesong Anymore' marks the end of love with a plangent, almost Satie-like melody, and 'Nostalgia' catches the blend of ease and spasmodic guilt about being lightweight which Moony and the best of his real-life models share. These 'bottom drawer' songs have real individuality, transcending the show's slightly nervous earlier attempts to show Moony's *alter ago*. They leave you thinking whether popular music simply supplies 'soft words for hard times' or can ask harder questions like 'which good old days were good for whom?'

Songbook brings a needed dose of theatrical density to Shaftesbury Avenue, and deserves to succeed, if only to remind sceptics that our commercial theatre can still be both literate and popular. It's staged with warmth and edge by Jonathan Lynn, with Gillian Lynne's knowing choreography. As a lugubriously nasal *chanteur*, a manic ringer for Ringo, or the deft purveyor of the show's most pointed numbers, Anton Rodgers shapes *Songbook*'s tone: ruefully aware, disabused, tender. Gemma Craven brings buckets of *chutzpah* to everything from smoochy Thirties crooning to a fine Marlene take-off, and she makes us care for Moony's wife. Diane Longton is a high-octane trouper of whom Cicely Courtneidge would be proud, and Andrew C. Wadsworth comes on like a dangerous cherub. David Healy as Moony works hard to be amiable.

Amiability also threatens *Songbook*'s neighbour *The Gin Game*, and is only averted by the craft of two masterly actors. Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn are inmates of an old folks' home, rendered down to its flickering black-and-white TV and last peel of greyish paint in David Mitchell's neo-realist set. D. L. Coburn, whose first play this is, sparingly deals out pathetic information about his characters' past lives, notably witholding the trump revelation that both are in the home on welfare – which must have been a body-blow to the health-insured audience on Broadway, where this play originated.

The dramatic interest lies in the play's repeated games of gin rummy. Games of apparent chance, like other intricate stage activities (meals and food preparation in Wesker, the erection of a tent in Storey's *The Contractor*) are a dramatist's boon: they give instant 'here and now' verisimilitude, and offer a formal framework which can carry subtle undertones, as in Chekhov, or conceal paucity, as in Coburn. It's the game-playing that's engrossing: Cronyn tapping an urgent percussive foot as he deals, obsessively tidying the table; Tandy's initial clumsiness, cool supremacy, the way she clutches her knee under pressure. Manwatching Desmond Morris would have a field day; mere theatregoers can relish the theatre equivalent of Ashkenazy and Perlman turning a dramatist's device into a metaphor for life's good and bad luck. Cronyn even makes the back of his neck eloquent.

Visual eloquence of a subtle and tenacious quality illuminates *Scars* by Hesitate and Demonstrate (three women, one man, otherwise unidentified), whose work is described by Adrian Henri in *P.S.*, a new magazine of performance art and allied activity, as 'a cross between Magritte and Rattigan'. Taking the Brontës as point of departure, the artist-performers construct an hour-long dream-sequence of images and actions which calmly evoke the dark solemnity and festering nightmares of the Brontë girls, and perhaps many a female psyche of today. Moving fluidly between a Haworth parlour, contemporary railway waiting-room and tracks, Gothic cemetery, opera-house box and neon-lit bar, the piece, played to a tape of wind, dogs, owls, Elgar and Yorkshire colliery brass bands, is studded with images which wouldn't disgrace a Webster play or Buñuel film. A pair of ear-rings inside a sandwich. A silver salver lifted, revealing a book. A tiger-skin rug rearing up and smothering a bride. A grave black-clad girl sprouting one white pre-Raphaelite angel's wing. It's softer and less aggressive than The People Show, pioneers of theatrical depth-probes into the cluttered British psyche; its poignancy is feminine and haunting.

Theatre – 2

Ian McEwan

In Season

As You Like It by SHAKESPEARE *Olivier*

Shakespeare had half a dozen comedies to his credit by the time he came to write *As You Like It*, and his total mastery of the form perhaps explains the breezy confidence with which he disposed of any narrative strength the play might have had in the interests of his lovers' business and pastoral themes. This is an immediate problem for any director. The play's opening scene is more leaden and expository ('As I remember, Adam . . .') than anything Shakespeare ever wrote; there is a long and static middle section devoted to various modes of wooing and amiable literary satire; and the play's two bad men – the cause of everyone's being in the forest in the first place – undergo preposterous and timely off-stage conversions to gentleness. John Dexter's production, sumptuous and literal, found some solutions (though not for the opening scene) which in turn created problems for his actors.

He was able to supply some narrative cohesion by emphasising the change of seasons as the play progressed. In the opening scene it is autumn and Orlando, rather improbably, is helping the yokels tie sheaves of corn. In Act Two, which contains many of the play's darker speeches, Arden is a wind-swept tundra, and

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there is everything in the text to confirm that it is cold. (Strange how some productions get away with an Arden in perpetual spring.) By Act Three it is warm enough for Orlando to vandalise the trees with his poems and for Rosalind, alias Ganymede, to find them.

From then on it is spring. Not Vergil's spring, nor Lodge's (Shakespeare's source), but that of a more recently expounded version of pastoral: a *Golden Bough* season of pre-Christian English country lore, lusty, blood-daubed, drunken, erotic and, of course, fertile, a time of holiday misrule and mating. An anthropologist's Tree of Life sprouts and blossoms centre stage, garlands and entrails of stags are hung, the bad men become good men as winter becomes spring, and by the end Dexter is in a position to mount an imposing masque on a scale that is bound to remind his audience that he is also a director of operas.

For a play that good-naturedly debunks the pastoral as well as the courtly, Dexter has perhaps taken his Frazer – copiously quoted in the programme notes – a little too seriously. If Shakespeare had read the 12 volumes of *The Golden Bough*, he might well have had Rosalind or Jacques or Touchstone say something perfectly witty and rude about it. Furthermore, it seemed to be a scheme of presentation more imposed upon than generated by the acting; slightly over-determined and, paradoxically, cerebral. Watching the plastic entrails being draped over the Tree of Life should have been funny without being embarrassing.

Rosalind dominates the play from beginning to end; she is virtually an on-stage director, pronouncing on the absurdities of courtly love ('men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love') teasing Orlando through his paces, managing the other love affairs, extracting promises and tying all the nuptial knots. Shaw described the role as an actress's Hamlet, although he was surely wrong to say that in both roles 'reasonable presentability being granted, failure is hardly possible'. Sarah Kestelman's Rosalind could well become a landmark in the history of the play's production, despite Frazer. Apart from an exquisite gift for comedy (she is funnier than the clown) one of her greatest assets is her voice: sometimes, to Orlando, tantalisingly androgynous; at others, suggestive of great strength and womanly passion which quite undermines, as Shakespeare no doubt intended, the denigrations (strangely appreciated by the audience) she is made to utter of her sex.

Although Chapman was scoffing at stage disguises in 1601 as 'the stale refuge of miserable poets by a change of a hat or a cloak to alter the whole state of a comedy', this was one particular convention Shakespeare did not parody. Orlando has the difficult task of persuading us to believe, with him, in Rosalind's Ganymede. Simon Callow managed this by appearing unconsciously to have recognised his lover in the boy, and by being alternately drawn and then startled by the implications of his attraction. It was a neat psychological balancing act, carried off with precision and humour.

Even if the director's anthropology sits too heavily on this production, it should be seen, not only for Kestelman's brilliance but for a number of small moments that can only have come from Dexter – Rosalind and Celia, all bustles and ruffs, wheeling about each other like automated chess pieces while the preposterous Le Beau spins dizzily between them; Jacques (Michael Bryant) eating an apple at the point of Orlando's sword; and Rosalind playing grandmother's footsteps with the cast while she speaks her epilogue: written for a boy, spoken by a woman, here was a final irony of disguise, touchingly exploited.

Art

John Spurling

Home Brew

Vanessa Bell: Paintings from Charleston
Anthony d'Offay

Most of the paintings by Vanessa Bell in the Anthony d'Offay exhibition date from after 1937, when her elder son was killed in the Spanish Civil War. 'His death,' writes Richard Shone in *Bloomsbury Portraits*,

> was a symbol of the growing horror of the decade and for Vanessa the end of all real happiness ... From that time onwards she clung more fiercely to her family circle and she and Duncan spent more and more time at Charleston.

There is no sense of horror or unhappiness in the paintings. On the contrary, all of them – flower arrangements, garden views and interiors – are bathed in sunshine. The impression of 'a forbidding, silently masterful, rather terrifying lady' which she made on visitors to the house seems irreconcilable with these bright, chocolate-box pictures.

The truth is that, like colour snaps taken with a cheap camera, they contain very little of the person who made them. The colours must be bright, the sun must shine, because the camera is too poor an instrument to cope with anything more subtle. Just so, framing devices (views through doors or windows) substitute for the organisation of space, detail is reduced to a generalised blur, everything is seen foursquare, stiff and frozen as if by the click of the shutter. That she was not always quite such a crude painter is suggested by only one painting in the show, a portrait of Aldous Huxley dating from 1929. Wearing an orange tie and a purplish-brown suit, Huxley is posed half-length against a crimson drape, his arms folded on his lap and his expression abstracted. The artist's interest in what she is doing is evident in the juxtapositions of colour, in the sitter's lively, tilted pose and especially in the close attention she has given to the face.

It was not that her son's death destroyed her as painter. She was never very good. She and Duncan Grant enjoyed a certain success because they were quicker than most to respond to the heady whiffs of Post-Impressionism from across the Channel. At the time, presumably, they looked new and energetic; now they look increasingly feeble and second-hand. They never grew beyond the aping of surface gestures because they never really understood the need for them. Compare Vanessa Bell's *The Other Room*, the largest painting in this show, dated 1930-35, with almost any of the Matisse paintings of ladies in interiors on which it is so obviously based. Matisse's figures may seem languid, but the rhythms they carry are as taut and exactly judged against the colours that surround them as if they were dancers unwinding a slow passage of music. Vanessa Bell has noticed the drooped figures and the use of pale, flat colours against sudden areas of patterning; she has got the idea of a space without depth. What she has missed completely is the purpose of these devices: the visual rhythms, the painted dance. Nothing whatever happens in *The Other Room*.

Yet she, as well as Duncan Grant, lived for painting. They loved it, not for what it could do on the canvas, but as a way of life. I suppose that many would-be artists start like that and then come to terms with reality either by giving up altogether or by eventually subordinating their lives to their work. For these two it was the other way about: their lives were the work of art and their painting played a major part in the creation. The moment one enters Charleston Farmhouse itself – shabby, somewhat dilapidated and ghostly as it now is, since Duncan Grant's death last year at the age of 93 – one understands that their paintings are not separable, self-sufficient things. They feed back into a particular private world, but they don't themselves contain enough of that world to travel. The portraits are perhaps an exception, as if the presence of the live sitter forced the artists into taking temporary account of an outside reality.

The house looks small as you approach it, but it rambles; and, though the rooms themselves are not very large, there are a great many of them. Three of the ground-floor rooms open on the walled garden, making it the focus and almost an extension of the house, a kind of displaced Roman atrium. The rooms too are in some sense Roman: the walls, doors, chimney-pieces and even some of the furniture painted with both abstract and figurative designs. But though many of the figures are distantly classical – draped caryatids and naked dancers – the general effect is not the least Roman; but rather, an extraordinary amalgam of influences (culminating, of course, with Post-Impressionism), all submitted to and wonderfully harmonising with the cottage Englishness inherent in the green, luxuriant garden (not so luxuriant now as it must have been in Vanessa Bell's time), the cosiness of the rooms and the dominance of comfortable, everyday furniture. Pliny's villa never looked like this, but perhaps Horace's Sabine farm-house did:

> I hate the profane crowd and keep them at a distance ... I, the Muses' priest ... why should I change my Sabine valley for the encumbrances of wealth? ... Maecenas, dear knight, here you'll drink cheap Sabine wine from ordinary cups.

A message, it might be, to Maynard Keynes, though some of the cups at Charleston are hand-painted.

The proconsuls of the 19th century saw themselves as governing a second Roman Empire; it is not surprising that their artistically-inclined, anti-authoritarian, pacifist descendants should have seen themselves, as so many of the Georgians did, in Horace's homely image. Charleston is the surviving monument to a certain kind of English bohemian idea, a combination of the spiritual and the practical, which still exerts a powerful hold on the English imagination. No doubt that is partly why, though they actually produced so little work of lasting value, the Bloomsbury

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group goes on being written and read about. Charleston, as Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell created it round themselves, is or should be of lasting value. The question is whether it can be preserved. The National Trust is interested, but money is lacking. Anyone who wants to help save it should write to Quentin Bell, Cobbe Place, Beddingham, Lewes, Sussex.

Sport

Russell Davies

At Grass

To Lords to see India save the Test. 'Admission this day £2.65' read the sign above the turnstile. Posterity may also be interested to know that hot-dogs – admittedly the St Bernards of the hot canine species – were 48p, and a pint of chilled carpet-shampoo 58p. As I emerged from the tunnel into the steamy green arena, Botham was barging up to bowl at Gavaskar; his next test wicket would be his 100th. The Tavern moaned *sotto voce* as Gavaskar shovelled a streaky one through the slips. Looking round to examine the moaners, I was astonished to see Philip Larkin standing there, dressed in an Our Man in Havana suit and projecting a gaze of legendary balefulness at the far score-board. It's at moments like this that I realise I'll never make a reporter. Any journalistic mongrel with a trace of the news-hound in him would have snuffled up to the future Laureate and tapped him for a couplet on the state of play. Larkin would have replied,

> What do you ask such damnfool questions for?
> Every sod here is playing for a draw.

and your reporter would thus have earned himself a footnote in the Balokowsky biography. Instead, he simply watched as the poet took his broad-beamed tropical britches away in the direction of the Taverners' enclosure.

The play was not as strikingly Larkinesque as it might have been, though Edmonds tended to bowl brisk, utilitarian stuff, for all the world as if this were Hull on a blustery Sunday. He probably deserved at least some of the filthy looks Chauhan gave him when caught at short leg by Randall. To say that Chauhan looked unconvinced by the decision would be to sell his pantomimic skill woefully short. He sloped off to the pavilion at a weaving dawdle, as though his central nervous system had been numbed by the intoxicating wrongness of what had occurred.

Botham's technique was interesting to watch from mid-wicket. As he runs up, he looks very conscious of his own weightiness – in fact, he spends the run gradually shrugging the whole heavy body into life. The final plunge of delivery is a terrific effort in itself: no doubt Botham could bowl respectably fast off a spinner's run. His slower ball, seen side-on, is really remarkably slow – the average ball in Edmonds's spell, I should think, was quicker. The over in which Botham took Gavaskar's wicket, his 100th dismissal, was so much the most dramatic of the day that the crowd was still bubbling around and snapping its braces half-an-hour later, before relapsing into mock-Humberside melancholy.

First Botham drops one short, and Gavaskar, flailing above shoulder level, sends a high slice to point, where Randall, encumbered by his blue helmet (which he mysteriously alternates with his hideous white American-football-cum-spaceman model), dives into a heap, drops the ball, and then hurls it away with such directionless malice that he almost gives away runs. However, the ball is recovered and tossed back to Botham, who turns and comes in as though he means it this time. You can tell when Botham is peeved, because his first stride is longer and deeper, causing his head to drop and shudder in a manner more pleasingly reminiscent of a wasp-stung dray-horse than ever. This time the ball is extremely fast and appears to shoot a little; Gavaskar half advances the bat and suddenly Brearley (already guilty, according to Tavern rumour, of dropping a pre-lunch stinger off Lever) is presenting his bottom to the sky as the ball rolls harmlessly away and his colleagues in the slips point, with generosity and tact, to a spot two yards or so in front of the ball's actual pitch-mark. As the Captain rises, they commiserate with him, presumably for not having arms eight feet long. Botham is now walking back almost as fast as he runs up. If there is a difference in colour between his face and the ball, I cannot perceive it.

This time he ducks so deeply into his run that forehead almost meets boot. He heaves himself up to the wicket and bowls a ball of mighty speed; this time the juice in the grass responds and Gavaskar is shuffling his bat into line as the ball passes. Once more the heavens shine on the seat of Brearley's trousers, but this time, and most commendably, he has the ball in his left hand. 'Who's the one with the steel-wool hair?' asks my surprised neighbour on the boundary, a famous actress who would rather not be named, let alone asked to sing 'Don't Cry for Me Argentina' again (by now, there appears to be an Equity meeting in front of the Tavern). I reply with a potted life story of Bonko Brearley. 'He lives with his Mum,' she adds helpfully. They always know the essential facts, even if they get the wrong man.

Botham's face had returned to its normal hue by the time the next man arrived at the crease, and the game itself likewise lost its temporary flush Apart from the crowd's reactions to bowling changes – it's quite clear there's a general feeling that Brearley could make his confidence in Lever and Miller much more obvious – there was little to report in the last, draughty session, which was survived with ease by Viswanath and Vengsarkar (a miniature Bluto and a born bank-manager respectively). The amazingly accommodating nature of cricket showed forth in the general good humour when bad light closed play early. People who had quite certainly come in all eagerness to see India collapse to another bad defeat went home pleased that nothing of the kind had happened. This is called 'making a game of it'. As I write, the same two Indians are keeping the process going, helping to make sure that the summer game doesn't drown prematurely in dead leaves and Emlyn Hughes interviews. You may claim, especially if you were in front of the Tavern on Monday, that cricket is to most watchers no more than a focus for sociability; but I don't think there's any doubt that this role alone offers the game a healthy future in an increasingly leisured yet anxious society.

Films

John Coleman

In the Event

The China Syndrome (A) *Leicester Square Theatre*
No Resting Place *National Film Theatre, 16 August*
Rankin' Movie *ICA until 29 August*

The old US boast ran, 'What's good for General Motors is good for the country'. What began happening at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on 28 March this year lends itself to an awful and ironic rejigging of the quote – something like, what's bad for General Public Utilities is good for Columbia Pictures. For, exactly two weeks after reviewing *The China Syndrome* (superb, but 'not the least bit fair-minded about nuclear power'), *Time* was devoting its cover story to 'Nuclear Nightmare', an eight-page investigation of what had gone wrong and was still going wrong with the power plant on Three Mile Island. By this time, then, one inevitably comes to the movie with an extra sense of chill and the sort of hindsight the world could well have done without. Or perhaps not: perhaps the real accident and the fictional previsioning – something preserved on celluloid – may reinforce one another in preventing grosser calamities, even prove a collocation devoutly to be wished.

On this reckoning, it is pure bonus that the film should be such a first-rate entertainment in its own right. Jane Fonda is a glamorous TV newscaster in Los Angeles, generally accompanied on assignment by a radical, freelance cameraman (Michael Douglas). Despatched on a routine tour of a nuclear energy plant, they see – from the glassed-off visitors' gallery – supervisor Jack Lemmon in the control room below in the throes of an 'event', or potential disaster. The cameraman, against the rules, secretly films. Back at the TV station, the director counsels caution. Douglas calls him a 'chickenshit asshole', steals back his impounded footage and gets it examined by a couple of nuclear experts, whose verdict is alarming. Meanwhile, Lemmon – at first loyalty itself – is thrown by a swift inquiry board and the decision to resume normal working. His own probings turn up a fatal leak and falsified x-rays of crucial welds. The corporation men move in; a car carrying those fake radiographs is forced off the road (remember Karen Silkwood's death-crash in 1974); in a finely reached finale, Lemmon takes over the control room at gun point and arranges for Fonda to get him live on to TV when he will tell all. The absolute end, with a glib PR man lying his head off and someone else coming good, may be left to you.

Everything and everyone works beautifully in this cautionary, quite complex movie. Produced by that same Michael Douglas (also co-producer of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*) who cynically sends up the magnificently-played Fonda-character for her

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spasms of professional vanity, technically vetted to perfection (or imperfection) in its control room detail, staffed throughout by credible actors, it is lucidly directed by James Bridges. Bridges also collaborated on the witty, quick, allusive script, with Mike Gray and T. S. Cook. For once even a couple of automobile chases are short and to the point. Jack Lemmon is at his rumpled, conscience-torn best, nervously eyeing a tell-tale tremor on the surface of his coffee, confessing 'I *love* that plant' before spilling the beans to the TV couple. As for the sub-world of TV itself, excellent and appropriate fun is had with banks of monitor screens, Fonda's sillier introductions (we open on The Singing Telegrams People and a Bellygram dancer) and larger ambitions, and the in-business of teleprompters complete with impromptus. Watch out for a commercial for the Top Five Microwave Ovens. There is the further matter of anti-nuke demos and hearings and the counter-machinations of the industry. Before Harrisburg, one criticism was generally current: the bad guys were too bad to be true. Who knows any more what's true?

Paul Rotha's *No Resting Place*, made in 1950, is one of the two feature films to his credit (the other is *The Silent Raid*, shot in the Netherlands in 1962, and unrecommendable), figuring along with his better-known documentaries in a short season beginning at the NFT on 14 August with *World of Plenty* and *Land of Promise*. Rotha has never been backward in coming forward in his own defence (witness the gritty 'review' of Forsyth Hardy's recent biography of Grierson in the Spring issue of *Sight and Sound*) and this sturdy cantankerousness may have contributed – as the NFT brochure's introduction delicately puts it – to his having 'been regarded by many as *l'enfant terrible* of British documentary'. But surely the importance of his contribution to that cross-currented movement is not in doubt. The best thing about *No Resting Place*, filmed entirely on location and on a low budget in Ireland, is simply the look of it, thanks to the superlatively defined black-and-white photography of Wolfgang Suschitzky. William Alwyn's music is also pleasant. The highly melodramatic story concerns the Kyles, a family of wandering Irish tinkers, and notably the sticky end come to by one of three brothers, Alec (Michael Gough, with blacked-up teeth), who is described as 'quare in the head'. One ill day, he accidentally kills a gamekeeper who has shot his small son slightly in the leg. Later, he half-brains a local Civil Guard (Noel Purcell). The acting is consistently ghastly, in keeping with the script; few chances are missed to pose characters against skylines; things go from bad to Erse.

Barely to be spoken of is Don Letts' 60-minute staccato *Rankin' Movie*. This is the kind of slapdash enterprise that might give Super 8mm stock, 3-minute cassettes and shoestrings a thoroughly evil name. Worse than that – it bores for blacks. Fragments of live performances by reggae bands and singers, random shots of Rastafarians smoking ganja with such cloudy enthusiasm it could as well be smoking them, cuts from Kingston to the Notting Hill carnival (which appears *no* fun here), all this and Godardian glimpses of posters, shop-signs, etc, add up to a great deal less than the sum of its parts. It is largely inaudible, save unfortunately for a folk poet chanting a doggerel number, 'Momma, let I tell you what they do to Jim'. Of course, 'they' are the fuzz and I think they kill him without cause. God knows there is a genuine police/black problem, but this is not the way to mess with it. What's of more interest is that the Letts botch is merely a running element in an ICA month called 'Britannia Waives the Rules'; and let me hereby strongly recommend to those who may not have seen them the following – *Emitai* and *Xala*, both by Ousmane Sembene, Horace Ove's *Pressure* and Perry Henzell's *The Harder They Come*. For these, much thanks.

Opera

Peter Conrad

Foul Fiend

Lucia di Lammermoor *Buxton Festival*

Superimposed pages from *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* hanging from the flies during the overture signal the intention of the Buxton planners to treat Donizetti's opera as a gloss on Scott's novel. The idea is honourable enough, but in practice it merely demonstrates how contrary are the purposes of literature and music, and how lovingly opera traduces the texts it adapts. Scott's novel (like all novels) realistically censors fantasy. His characters inhabit a dreary, desolate, faction-ridden world from which they look to romance and its chivalric fictions for release. But the fancy can't cheat well enough to extricate them. Romantic imagination is the medium, as Scott shows, of self-deception. Ravenswood wants to call up 'some evil fiend', but the only diabolical power available to him is his own 'violent and unresisted passions'. Lucy's day-dreaming about 'the old legendary tales' unsettles her mind, and leaves her passively incapable of saving herself. But music is readier to pardon the excess of imagination than the sternly realistic novel. In Donizetti's opera the dreams of Scott's beleaguered, impoverished characters come melodiously true.

The Bride of Lammermoor is about a ruined nobility which can no longer afford romance. Ravenswood's lair is a dank, ratty hole, where he's fed indigestible messes by an imbecile domestic. The old retainer Alice lives in a cottage which is picturesque because derelict and dirty. Instead of Una's 'generous lion' from *The Faerie Queene*, which Lucy has been reading, she's menaced by a rampaging bull, bellowing fearfully. Lucy is defrauded by her own romantic expectations of life (Ravenswood chides her for her rhapsodic talk: 'in poetry there is always fallacy, and sometimes fiction') and duped into madness by her credulity – a superstitious beldame recites tales of bogeys to her, and worries her into a depression.

The operatic characters, on the contrary, are poetic fantasists, not Scott's victims of irrational imagination. Donizetti's two-part arias orchestrate emotion rather than censuring it, as Scott does. Gentle, mournful cavatinas indulge emotion which the resolute, assertive cabalettas purge. Lucia's cavatina at the fountain is a leisurely exposition of a fantasy; the brilliant cabaletta which follows headily wills that fantasy into truth by summoning up Edgardo. In the duet his musical progress is in the opposite direction: he begins wrathfully, but is calmed by Lucia's lyricism. Instruments are singled out to transcribe the vagrant, improvisatory freedom of Lucy's romantic mind. The harp introduces her reverie at the fountain, the flute eerily accompanies her delirium. When Edgardo stabs himself and can't complete his cabaletta, the cellos volunteer to do so on his behalf. Transforming the voice into an agile, virtuoso instrument, Donizetti is insubstantiating Scott's characters. In the novel, Lucy dies in gibbering insanity, and Ravenswood accidentally drowns. But in the opera they enjoy a lyrical levitation, spreading their wings (as Edgardo says) and floating aloft to the mystical marriage Lucia celebrates in her mad scene. No wonder *Lucia* was the opera to which Flaubert despatched his over-romantic fantasist, Mme Bovary.

Lucy's madness in the novel is grotesquely inarticulate. She makes mouths and dabbles 'her bloody fingers, with the frantic gestures of an exulting demoniac'. Lucia's madness, however, is a seraphic vocal concert. This contradiction was developed in a recital, given as part of the festival, contrasting the mad ladies of literature with those of opera. Eleanor Bron did the literary lunatics in undergraduettish funny voices – gurgling Mrs Rochester, dusty Miss Havisham, Strindberg's violently obscene Miss Julie. Anthony Hose, at the piano, ventured some loathsome puns. But opera is fanatically impervious to humour, and Pauline Tinsley, withstanding the jibes of her colleagues, sang her mad scenes gamely and acted them with fierce conviction. Among the musical heroines was Ophélie, from Ambroise Thomas's *Hamlet*, to be staged next year at Buxton. Shakespeare's Ophelia is a Freudian case-study. Madness liberates her stifled sexual yearnings, and permits her, like the shepherds with the long purples, to give grosser, ribaldly comic names to the experiences she's suffered through. Opera does away with this incontinent comedy, and turns her distraction into levity: in Thomas's mad scene, Ophelia is a waltzing soubrette, distributing flowers to her audience of astonished courtiers.

Buxton's *Lucia* was a notable success, thanks mainly to the craggy landscape of its set, with a megalomaniac castle perching among collapsing mountains. The atmospheric effects were aptly lurid: pea-soupers of dry ice, torchlight flickering on the carious masonry of the Ravenswood tombs, rippling reflections from the haunted fountains. The Lucia I heard, Deborah Cook, was a substitute. She chirped cutely, but is a singer in the wrong tradition, sounding in her madness less like a nightingale than a cuckoo clock gone crazily out of control. Nevertheless, the festival has been intelligently conceived as a unity – there are even a few pictorial Lucys hanging in the local art gallery: not, unfortunately, Delacroix's satiated killer, a lioness at feeding time, but good Victorian versions of Scott's character by Millais (who's more interested in the pre-Raphaelite fernery of the well than in the narrative) and Frith (who's more interested in period costume and painting a fussy domestic interior). I hope Buxton prospers.

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Television

Julian Barnes

Hearing Voices

A few months ago Sir Robert Mark misguidedly lent his gaunt authority to an advertising campaign which, whatever it was intended to do for Mark's favourite charity, was also intended to sell lots more Goodyear tyres. Maybe it should be put down to ingenuousness, one thought, a naive failure to grasp the potency of the medium. But you can hardly say the same of René Cutforth, one of those Voices which through decades of broadcasting have always seemed to enshrine a questioning, sceptical stance. Don't trust the buggers, the Voice implies, regardless of the words it might be uttering at the time.

On top of the Voice, Cutforth has one of those creased, Audenish faces which assures all of us stop-at-home telly-gawpers with wrinkle-free complexions that he, at least, has taken on board a lot of deeply lived experience. For some years he has been the obvious choice as frontman for those programmes which reassess decades and chivvy us into fresh thinking about our recent past. So what the hell is Old Mr Honest doing advertising Krona margarine? Does he realise the (strictly non-selling) effect he has as he strides through Australian supermarkets and loiters outside the Australian parliament, peddling his marge? How can he do it? I suppose the sad answer is that there isn't a living wage to be had any more from being a gritty Voice of Integrity; but if it goes on like this it can only be a matter of time before James Cameron is waving handfuls of biological suds in our faces, or Malcolm Muggeridge is hauled out of retirement to hype three-piece suites in the Williams super summer sale. And then we'll know that none of it really does matter after all.

'I'm quite tall myself, so I don't mind tall girls. I don't mind short girls either.' Or medium-sized girls. Or *any* sort of girls, as long as they are the sort of girls who don't mind me. This timid wail of a hopeful mate-seeker opened *I Look Like This* (Granada), Jana Bokova's cutesy but gripping report on a dating agency where clients make commercials of themselves on videocassette. The filmees are softly prompted into stating their needs by an off-camera voice, like this. 'What kind of guy are you looking for?' Long pause from a very Westernised Indian girl, various coy thoughts, a giggle, then *'Really* good-looking.' That must have put off quite a few potential dates, especially as one characteristic the agency's clients tended to have in common, not surprisingly, was a slightly rocky self-esteem.

We met a huge, chucklingly charming West Indian – 'I drive an old banger, an Escort which gets me from A to B, so you won't need to worry about transportation'; a humorous girl looking for someone 'a bit crazy'; and a barrow-man who'd brought along his small son to leaf through the folders of clients ('She's *forty*,' squeaked the infant at one file in appalled disgust). The film's impressionistic technique left one hungry for more plot (she picked him and he picked her and the consequence was . . .), particularly as this area of human dealings is riddled with plot. But the only rounded story we had was a harrowing one from the Indian girl. An English boy had got her pregnant and dumped her. She didn't want to lose the child, so she went to Videodate and made a tape; then waited hopefully to see if there was anyone interested in looking after the pair of them. When, after a while, no one had shown any interest in her cassette, she went ahead and had an abortion. Then she returned to Videodate to look for someone willing to care for her by herself. It was a haunting version of the triumph of hope over experience.

I'm glad to note that as a result of the rebuke administered to him by this column last August, Barry Norman only changed his clothes once in the course of last week's *The Hollywood Greats* (BBC-1). During his first series he was swapping natty outfits with a sort of anal-neurotic compulsiveness that must have pleased all the launderers and dry-cleaners watching, but nobody else. In the opening episode of the new series, Barry wore just the one little number for the New York scenes, and one for the Californian ones. This seemed right and normal (John Coleman tells me it's called continuity); so maybe Barry is picking up a few of the Lessons of Hollywood.

Edward G. Robinson also changed his clothes very little in the course of Barry's bio of him: from film to film it was bursting double-breasted suit, tight tie, slouch hat, and metal persuader clamped in the right mitt. It was news to me, but doubtless not to film buffs, that Robinson came to screen gangsterdom from a successful Broadway stage career. He lived with his parents in the Bronx until he was 33, and so that they wouldn't think he was wasting money, used to get taxis to drop him off three blocks short of his home. In later years, when he considered returning to the stage, he found that he was so rich he couldn't afford it – a paradox better understood in Hollywood than over here. But you see, there was the art collection to think about, and, as a friend put it, if Edward G. took a salary cut, 'Who was to support the pictures?'

Barry's bios are constantly watchable: chatty, bitchy, snappily told. It's fascinating, if stomach-turning, to view his line-up of liver-spotted old movie moguls, who bask like lizards in the Californian sun, and reminisce contentedly about how it was they who were really responsible for the stars becoming stars. And of course it's always these old bastards who seem to survive while Barry's subjects are busy dropping dead. This confirms my suspicion that the fundamental appeal of Barry's bios is that they are cast as moral tales. Perkiness is always his chosen manner, but he perks up even more than usual when he gets to the part of his star's life where the hero screws up. Booze, pills, nymphomania, psychosis: the retailing of each seems to give Barry a jolt of excitement. Look, he says, there *is* a price after all which is exacted for being this famous, this rich, this different from us. A fair enough approach – and we can all join in – when it's the case of an ego-crazed sybarite indulging himself to ruin. It seems less fair when Barry's near-glee is occasioned by the crack-up not of the star but of those around him; in Edward G.'s case, his first wife proved manic depressive and his son was an alcoholic, thieving failure. And on these occasions Barry seems less like an irreverent social historian and more like a tick-bird picking away inside a hippo's mouth.

'Friendship First, Competition Second' is the slogan of the Football Association of the People's Republic of China. On *International Soccer* (BBC-2) their team played West Brom and practised what they preach. As the home side struggled to find their shooting boots, China's Friendly centre-half helped out by chesting the ball firmly into his own net. The defence then let in three more Friendly goals against a sluggishly Competitive Albion attack, for whom my distant cousin Peter Barnes was in sparkling £650,000 form. The Voice of Motson was heard again in the land, gamely identifying indistinguishable Chinese, all of whom came equipped with three names. There was one whose Christian name was Whang and whose surname was Dong. Let's hope that Cyrille Regis sounds as ticklish to the Chinese ear.

Weekend Competition

No 2578 **Set by Fatboy**

In Tom Stoppard's *Dogg's Hamlet* the cast act a compressed version of *Hamlet* in five minutes flat; and then, for an encore, in 90 seconds. It's time, perhaps, to give the playwright a dose of his own medicine: reduce any existing Stoppard play to a maximum of 180 words; or, if you prefer, write an entirely new one of the same length. By 24 August.

Result of No 2575 **Set by P.W.R. Foot**

We asked for extracts from either Jane Austen's *Under Milk Wood* or Dylan Thomas's *Pride and Prejudice*.

Report **by Eric Chubby**

As we expected, a comp for the pros. Those who fell short of the winners' standard did so in predictable ways: assuming either that their Henry-James-and-water mixture was near enough for Jane Austen, or that alliteration plus rudery gave you an *echt* Thomas. Not so. Seven pounds each to those printed.

Captain Cat, of Schooner House, Llareggub, in the county of Carmarthen, sat at his window-seat. His deficiency of sight being assisted by a liberality of percipience, he apprehended Mrs Ogmore-Pritchard with circumspection. Losing two husbands was no guarantee of her not hoping for a third and he envied neither Mr Ogmore nor Mr Pritchard their subservient roles. The ladies said that the Captain had only once considered marriage: the late Miss Probert was mentioned. But though he occasionally observed that Miss Price might pay more heed to the attentions of Mr Edwards, to their mutual advantage, he was more often heard criticising the imprudent Mr Waldo and the baneful Mr Pugh and sympathising with their wives. *He* would never marry. The dissipations of this cheerful seaside

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village, with its luxuriant woody growths, and the constant memory of his wild days in the Navy, gave him sufficient pleasure.

LAURENCE FOWLER

First Voice: From the parlour now, Mrs Bennet, blooming in the gloom like a rum-rosy midwife, clattering quietly through the sad-shadowed hall, to call on

Second Voice: Canon Collins, all pomp and punctured celibacy, standing like a cock-eyed candle while the handle turns, divulging the clucking of his hen-hostess, already pumping his lumpy hands, swamping his spilling apologies with a crash of congratulation

Mrs Bennet: Depend upon it, Canon, you'll be bathed in blessings within this fifteen minutes

Canon Collins: I praise you for the flattery, and fulsome too, of your mellifluous felicitations, but your daughter's desisted from attaching her definite affections in my direction

Mrs Bennet: Oh, Canon Collins! I'll lash her to your tailcoats with a touch of my tongue

Lizzy Liploose: But mother, he's as stuck-up as a big-bristled, pig-bristled broom in a pixie's chimney, proposing like a plumber's piano, one pumped by hand, and all on one note, and that's flat, and so's my answer . . .

BILL GREENWELL

Llaregyb was a name not to be found in any Baronetage; indeed its name was in itself a matter of some dispute; some authorities declaring, authoritatively, that its orthography was suspect. Whatever the spelling it was a fact that there was no Llaregyb Hall on page or seafront; and money proved similarly scanty.

This had long been an annoyance to Captain Cat, who derived much pleasure from dreams of wealth and aristocracy. He was a man upon whom Nature had bestowed generous portions of Vanity; a talent he had repaid tenfold. His was a courtesy title give by his parents in the hope, which proved as vain as their offspring, that this would assist a suitable match. It had effected an introduction to Rosie, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Probert; but nothing for Society to speak of had come from this union.

SIDNEY GIDNEY

First Voice: It is night in the smug snug-as-a-bug-in-a-rug household of Mr and Mrs Dai Bennet and their simpering daughters – five breast-bobbing man-hungry tittivators, innocent as ice-cream, panting for balls and matrimony.

Mrs Bennet: Our new neighbour, Mr Darcy, quite tickles my fancy.

Mr Bennet: Don't let him turn Lizzy's head Darcy-versy.

Elizabeth: I shall wed whom I please.

First Voice: And busy Lizzy retires to her room with visions of bridling up the aisle to 'I will' with half-a-dozen demon lovers. She dreams of coaches and pairs and being a fine lady; dressing for dinner in a silken gown and undressing afterwards for heaven knows what in the saucy haven of a double bed; swoons, seductions and *sal volatile*; tears, tantrums and tedium; the pettish petticoquettish world of the country-house marriage-go-round from which she and her whinnying sisterhood can never hope to escape.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

That Mrs Ogmore-Pritchard should, in the elaboration of her surname, have chosen to commemorate both her lamented spouses was accounted by some an affecting instance of connubial piety. Others, less charitably, saw in it a token of her extreme reluctance, once she had taken firm possession of anything, ever again to part with it. In support of the former view, it might be said that Mr Ogmore and Mr Pritchard were by no means debarred by the mere fact of mortality from continuing to imbibe from the beaker of marital bliss. Indeed, their 'lateness' in the terrestrial sense, would not have been regarded by their relict as any extenuation of their lateness in another; namely, the discharge of those innumerable household functions which, in her unsleeping concern for their domestic virtue, Mrs Ogmore-Pritchard had so selflessly conceded that they should undertake . . .

MARTIN FAGG

Tony Miles

Chess

No 144 **April Problems**

I must apologise to regular problem solvers for falling so far behind with results, but I have been abroad so much recently that I haven't had a chance to plough through the evergrowing pile of entries. I hope to catch up soon. The April problems were not a tricky lot – as one correspondent observed, clearly I wasn't playing any interesting games at the time.

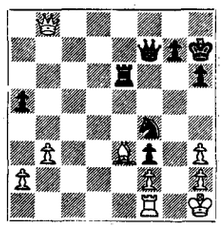
Problem 127 (5r1k/p2r3p/1p2q3/3bb3/3R1p2/P1BQpP2/1P2P1BP/6RK) had two acceptable solutions: 1.B-R3!, QxB; 2.RxBP! mating quickly on R5 or B8, as I gave, and 1.R-K4!, BxR (or . . . R-B4; 2.B-R3 pinning everything); 2.QxR!, QxQ; 3.BxBch and now either . . . K-N1; 4.B-3ch, or . . . Q-N2; 4.BxQch and PxB in each case with an extra piece for White.

In Problem 128 (6k1/pp4bp/2b1p1p1/2p1P1q1/1n2Br2/2N1Q1NP/PP4P1/R5K1) clearly Black has a winning position in any case, so no points for the tedious 1 . . . BxP. It should have been fairly clear that I was after 1 . . . N-B7; 2.BxN (2.P-KR4 fails to QxKP), R-B8ch! and if 3.NxR, QxP mate, so White's queen goes.

Problem 129 (3r2k1/pp3pb1/3q2pp/2p2b2/2P2PP1/4B2P/PP6/2K1QB1R) is a nice mating combination: 1 . . . BxPch; 2.KxB, Q-N3ch; 3.K-R3 (3.K-R1, Q-B3ch mates, as do 3.K-B1, Q-N8ch and 3.K-B3, Q-N5), R-Q8! (the sting – if QxR; Q-N5 mate); 4.Q-B3, Q-R3ch and 5 . . . R-N8ch winning.

Problem 130 (r1rbb3/1R3pkp/2pBp1p1/p3P3/q6P/6P1/P2Q1P2/1R3BK1) was another pretty mate. 1.R(1 or 7)-N4! (but not immediately 1.Q-R6ch?, KxQ; 2.B-B8ch, K-R4; 3.B-K2ch, Q-N5), PxR; 2.Q-R6ch!, KxQ; 3.B-B8ch, K-R4; 4.B-K2 mate.

Because of the simplicity of the problems any slight analytical errors were heavily punished, but there was still a vast number of correct sets. So £4 each to Messrs Bradley, Brown, Carr, Deshmukh, Garfath, Ghate, Hannon, Johnson, McSheehy, Neelakantan, V. Sobey, Southgate and Taylor.



Problem 144

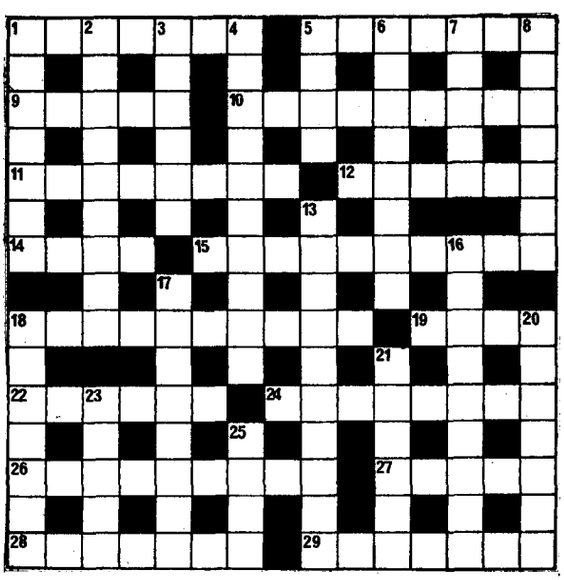
Black to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 22 August.

Solution to Problem 142

1 . . . P-N6ch; 2.KxP (else . . . PxP), R-B4ch! and if 3.K-N2, R-N4ch, or 3.P-B4, BxPch; 4.K-B3, R-B1, or 3.K-N4 (or R4), BxN (or R-N4ch if you want to be dramatic); 4.PxB, R-N4ch winning.

Weekend Crossword 1312

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1312, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 21 August.



ACROSS

1 Young animal makes tailless male run backwards (7).
5 Painter who gets his money back on wine (7).
9 Become aware the North is on the king's side (5).
10 He tests the product but is unusually late getting to the plant (9).
11 Make art evoke pass (8).
12 Electricity generated when mother faces father (6).
14 Near socialist, by the sound of it (4).
15 Farm closed indefinitely, so we need these in the garden (4,6).
18 Messages saying a hundred is backed by crazy gamblers (10).
19 Embrace nothing as a novelist (4).
22 More ideal (6).
24 Veronese house a chinless friar hires out (8).
26 Flower as award for goat? (9).
27 Children's writer from another generation (5).
28 A former player, he compels payment (7).
29 Darkness provides short cuts between points (7).

DOWN

1 European with nothing on behind the barrier (7).
2 There is nothing up in Thomas's place (9).
3 King whose heart is a head (6).
4 Dark poet holds love to be something to write on (10).
5 Sounds a lot for a very humble person (4).
6 Sword lays Sir Thomas below the earth (8).
7 Chemical would make Ireland go up if it lost heart (5).
8 Cricket which makes Kerry so excited (7).
13 A mother's fruit brings a lump to the throat (5,5).
16 Pure atoms are split but its victims are tiny creatures (9).
17 Put it up among the new and reserved (8).
18 Caught sound of decay (7).
20 'Sailing on —— wings athwart the noon' (Coleridge) (7).
21 Measure which would reduce the misery on public transport (6).
23 Duck as it goes into port (5).
25 If let this mark would become red (4).

SETSQUARE

Solution to Salamanca 20

C	L	A	M	B	A	K	E	R	I	M	E	
O	R	L	O	P	M	A	R	I	N	E	R	
H	O	B	O	C	E	J	G	P	A	R	R	
O	C	A	R	I	N	A	O	N	C	E	A	
R	E	T	A	T	D	■	B	C	H	U	T	
T	A	R	G	E	C	■	A	R	I	N	A	
A	N	O	E	■	I	■	L	O	R	I	C	
T	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	I	T	O	
T	I	■	L	E	M	I	A	■	M	A	L	
A	R	K	■	■	■	■	■	B	O	L	T	
C	O	M	I	T	I	A	D	O	Y	L	E	
K	N	O	T	H	E	L	L	W	A	R	D	

Asterisked clues refer to S. T. Coleridge's 'The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner'.

Prizewinners to Salamanca 20

T. Deveson (London SE5)
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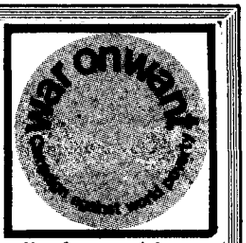

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